Negotiation for Meaning and Assessment of Oral Proficiency through Paired Interactive Tasks: Evidence from EFL Children and Adults at Beginner Levels of Competence

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages)

CO (Comprehensible Output)

EAP (English for Academic Purposes)

ELT (English Language Teaching)

FL (Foreign Language)

FLA (Foreign Language Acquisition)

FonF (Focus on Form)

IH (Interaction Hypothesis)

MO (Modified Output)

NoC (Negotiation of Content)

NoF (Negotiation of Form)

NoM (Negotiation of Meaning)

OPI (Oral Proficiency Interview)

OPT (Oral Proficiency Testing)

SL (Second Language)

SLA (Second Language Acquisition)

TL (Target Language)

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ABSTRACT

Long's Interaction Hypothesis (1996) states that Second Language Acquisition is facilitated by face-to-face interaction, particularly by means of negotiation of meaning. Originally, interaction-based studies focussed on adult populations (e.g., Gass & Varonis, 1985a; Pica & Doughty, 1985b, to name but some). Subsequently, research interest encompassed children learning English as a Second Language (e.g., Mackey & Oliver 2002; Oliver 2002), and only lately have scholars included children learning English as a Foreign Language (e.g., Azkarai & Imaz Agirre, 2015; García Mayo & Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2015). However, despite widely claimed age-related differences in SLA (e.g., Bialystok, 1997), little is known about the differences between adult and children learners when they negotiate, and studies examining these differences under similar conditions, i.e., involving adults and children with similar levels of proficiency while performing the same task in the target language, are very much needed.

On the other hand, we have witnessed a gradual increase in the use of paired-interaction as the format of choice in the assessment of foreign language oral proficiency. Numerous scholars support its potential to generate a broader range of functions than individual tests, given its leading to a more balanced and interactive communication, where interactional patterns are more varied (A. M. Ducasse & A. Brown, 2011). Nevertheless, studies underpinning such notion have taken place in the upper levels of the Common

European Framework of Reference (CEFR) (B1, B2, C1, C2). Thus, its application and validity on the lower levels remained unexplored.

The aim of this thesis is, therefore, twofold: (i) On the one hand it strives to examine the interactional features of level-matched children and adults while performing the same tasks. For this purpose, we analyse their interactional patterns following the classical and also the more recent classifications of conversational strategies (Lázaro Ibarrola and Hidalgo, 2017; Oliver, 1998) and the influence of their shared L1 (Spanish) (García-Mayo and Lázaro, 2015). We finally delve into the idiosyncrasies of children and adults' interactions regarding the tactics deployed and their ability to complete the tasks successfully (Pinter, 2006). (ii) The second objective of this thesis is to evaluate the suitability and validity of the paired format to assess oral proficiency, i.e., peer-peer, as a means to achieve a wide spectrum of language samples in the oral proficiency of A1 EFL children and adults. Following Brooks (2009), we do so by supplementing the features of interaction with other aspects of the participants' performance, namely duration, amount of production and turn-taking patterns. We will also compare the production of the children in the present study with various public samples from official examinations Cambridge's YL Movers and Trinity's GESE Grade II.

In order to attain these goals we analysed the interactions of 20 children aged 8 to 9 years old, and 14 adults with an age range between 31 and 69. All participants shared the same proficiency level, A1 of the CEFR,

and performed a story-telling task 4 times, 2 of them with a peer and 2 of them with a proficient speaker of English. The task procedure was always the same but the story was different on each attempt.

The results obtained show that both populations produce similar rates of conversational adjustments during peer-peer interaction. By contrast, when such interaction takes place with an expert it is the adults who negotiate more frequently. Both groups mirror their repetition patterns, that is, they tend to repeat themselves in peer-interaction, whereas they repeat more of their interlocutor's discourse when engaged in interaction with an expert.

Contrary to previous studies (Pinter 2006), data regarding L1 have revealed a high use of Spanish lexical items in the adult group, as opposed to the nearly non-existent instances of L1 explicit terms in the children population. However, both groups show evident signs of their L1 morphosyntax seeping through their English output, a trait which was all the more noticeable in the children group.

Interestingly, adults made use of task-orientated tactics much more effectively than did the children, in the same line as Pinter's (2006) findings.

Regarding the analysis of the validity of the paired task for the assessment of oral proficiency, it was clear that all statistically significant differences regarding NoM strategies (with the exception of clarification requests in the adult group) included higher rates in the paired interactive mode, reflecting therefore the advantages of this interactive format also in the

lowest level of the CEFR. In other words, the spectrum of language generated in peer interaction is wider and less asymmetrical than the one obtained in the examiner- examinee layout. However, children were more consistently benefited in this respect, since adults displayed an overall higher use of conversational adjustments (although not significant) in the individual mode. Moreover, the analysis of the discourse produced by candidates in official samples from Cambridge's YL Movers and Trinity's GESE Grade II oral exams show a clear lack of relevant features of natural interaction, operationalized in this study by way of conversational adjustments.

Finally, both groups yielded a similar amount of output in both interaction modes, although it took children more time to perform the task when interacting with a peer. Results regarding turn-taking patterns reveal higher rates in the student-expert interaction format. However, a more detailed analysis allows us to note a higher use of discourse markers, acknowledgments and listener-support moves on the expert's part, which seem to trigger a higher rate of shorter, quicker responses on both groups, more significantly so in the case of children.

RESUMEN

La Hipótesis de la Interacción de Long (1996) sostiene que la adquisición de segundas lenguas es facilitada por la interacción *cara a cara*, particularmente a través de la negociación de significado. Los estudios de investigación interaccionistas en segundas lenguas se centraron inicialmente en adultos (p.ej. Gass & Varonis, 1985a; Pica & Doughty, 1985b); más tarde se amplió el ámbito a niños aprendiendo inglés como segunda lengua (p.ej. Mackey & Oliver, 2002; Oliver, 2002), y, recientemente ha incluido investigación con niños aprendiendo inglés como lengua extranjera (p.ej. García Mayo & Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2015). Sin embargo, a pesar de las diferencias observadas entre niños y adultos aprendiendo segundas lenguas (p.ej. Bialystok, 1997), apenas hay estudios que exploren las diferencias en cómo negocian estas dos poblaciones y, en particular, es necesario realizar estudios que comparen niños y adultos en condiciones similares, es decir, realizando las mismas tareas en el mismo estudio y con nivel de idioma similar.

Por otro lado, existe un aumento creciente de la práctica interactiva entre iguales como instrumento de evaluación de la competencia oral en lengua extranjera respecto al formato individual examinador-candidato. Numerosos investigadores aducen que el formato interactivo permite evaluar una gama de destrezas más amplia que los test individuales, donde la interacción es más equilibrada e interactiva, y donde los candidatos producen

un mayor rango de funciones, incluyendo patrones interaccionales más variados (en Ducasse & Brown, 2011). No obstante, los estudios que apoyan esta noción se han llevado a cabo en los niveles superiores del Marco Europeo de Referencia (MCER) (B1, B2, C1, C2), por lo que su aplicación y validez en los niveles básicos sigue siendo un campo inexplorado.

El objetivo de esta tesis doctoral es, por tanto, doble: (i) Por una parte pretende examinar las características de la interacción en niños y adultos de competencia lingüística similar (inicial) durante la realización de las mismas tareas. Para ello analizamos los patrones de interacción siguiendo la clasificación de estrategias conversacionales (Lázaro Ibarrola e Hidalgo, 2017; Oliver, 1998), así como la influencia de la L1 compartida por los participantes (castellano) (García-Mayo y Lázaro Ibarrola, 2015). También se detallan las particularidades de las interacciones de niños y adultos en lo referente a las tácticas de desempeño de tareas, así como su capacidad para llevarlas a cabo de forma satisfactoria (Pinter, 2006). (ii) El segundo objetivo de esta tesis es analizar la idoneidad y validez del formato interactivo por parejas como medio para obtener un espectro amplio de lenguaje en la evaluación de la competencia oral de niños y adultos en el nivel A1 del MCER. Siguiendo a Brooks (2009), lo hacemos complementando los elementos de la interacción presentados anteriormente junto con parámetros como la duración, la cantidad de producción y los patrones en los turnos de conversación. En nuestro caso, adicionalmente, comparamos los resultados de nuestra muestra de niños/as con los obtenidos tras el análisis de varios

modelos publicados de los exámenes oficiales Cambridge's YL Movers y Trinity's GESE Grade II.

Para conseguir estos objetivos hemos analizado las interacciones de 20 niños con edades comprendidas entre los 8 y 9 años de edad, y con 14 adultos con edades entre los 31 y los 69 años. Cada participante llevó a cabo 4 tareas comunicativas, consistentes en narración de historias, dos de las cuales tuvieron lugar con un(a) compañero(a) del mismo nivel, y otras dos con un hablante experto de la lengua objeto (inglés). En las 4 tareas se siguió un procedimiento similar y únicamente se modificó el contenido de las propias historias.

Los resultados obtenidos indican que tanto niños como adultos a este nivel producen niveles similares de ajustes conversacionales cuando interactúan entre iguales. Por el contrario, cuando la interacción tiene lugar con un experto son los adultos quienes recurren a ajustes conversacionales más frecuentemente. Ambos grupos muestran patrones de repetición similares: repiten elementos de su propio discurso cuando dialogan con un(a) compañero/a, pero repiten en mucha mayor medida elementos de su interlocutor cuando éste es un experto usuario de la lengua. Los datos concernientes al uso de la L1, ponen de manifiesto una utilización mucho más frecuente de elementos léxicos explícitos por parte del grupo adulto frente a un uso prácticamente nulo por parte de los niños, a diferencia de estudios anteriores (Pinter, 2006). Sin embargo, ambos grupos evidencian la influencia morfosintáctica de la L1 en su producción en inglés, rasgo aún más patente

en el caso de la población infantil. En cuanto a la resolución de la tarea, los adultos hacen uso de estrategias específicas de forma mucho más efectiva que los niños, coincidiendo así con lo hallado por Pinter (2006).

Los hallazgos referentes al segundo objetivo de esta tesis indican que, salvo excepción, todas las diferencias estadísticamente significativas incluyeron ratios más elevados de estrategias de negociación en el formato interactivo por parejas en ambos grupos, reflejando las ventajas de esta modalidad también en el nivel inferior del MCER. Es decir: cuando los/as alumnos/as interactúan entre iguales, se genera un espectro de lenguaje más amplio y menos asimétrico que el obtenido a través de la interacción examinador-candidato. Sin embargo, fueron los/as niños/as quienes se beneficiaron más consistentemente en este respecto, ya que el grupo adulto mostró un mayor índice de utilización (no significativo) de ajustes conversacionales en el modo individual.

Asimismo, el análisis del discurso generado en los modelos oficiales publicados de los exámenes oficiales Cambridge's YL Movers y Trinity's GESE Grade II ponen de manifiesto una carencia muy evidente de importantes elementos de la interacción natural, operacionalizados en nuestro caso a través de ajustes conversacionales.

Por último, ambos grupos generaron una cantidad de lenguaje similar en ambos formatos de interacción, si bien tomó a los/as niños/as más tiempo realizarlo cuando dicha interacción tuvo lugar entre iguales. Los resultados

referentes a patrones en turnos conversacionales reflejan números superiores en la interacción con el experto. Sin embargo, un análisis más cualitativo permite advertir una utilización frecuente por parte del hablante experto de marcadores discursivos, así como de elementos de confirmación de comprensión y apoyo al interlocutor, algo que genera un porcentaje más elevado de respuestas más breves y rápidas en ambos grupos, particularmente en el caso de la población infantil.

INTRODUCTION

What happens when two speakers talk to one another in a language other than their own? A great number of studies from different fields and perspectives have made attempts to answer this apparently simple question. In the field of SLA, most of the research on oral conversation has been generated within the interactionist framework and has characterised the features and learning opportunities of learners' negotiations considering a wide array of variables (e.g., age, level, context, task-type, etc.). Likewise, the language testing domain has also considered oral interactions from a different perspective: as a valid context for the assessment of learners' oral proficiency. This thesis constitutes an attempt to connect both points of view, i.e., the characterisation of interactional features and their validity for oral assessment, for we believe this can help build a more complete answer to the question of what goes on when language learners entertain conversations. In order to do so, we collect data from children and adults at a similar level of proficiency (beginner or A1 level following the CEFR) in English as a foreign language, which allows us, in turn, to compare the different behaviours of the two age groups.

Long's Interaction Hypothesis (IH) (1996) claims that second language acquisition (SLA) is promoted by face-to-face interaction and communication, particularly via negotiation for meaning, given that it

"connects input, internal learner capacities, and output in productive ways." (M.H. Long, 1996).

Initially, research studies analysing the benefits of interaction for SLA focussed on adult learners (e.g. Gass & Varonis, 1985a.; Pica & Doughty, 1985b; P. A. Porter, 1986; Yule & Macdonald, 1990). Subsequent studies by Alison Mackey and Rhonda Oliver (Mackey & Oliver, 2002; Mackey, Oliver, & Leeman, 2003; Oliver, 1995a, 1995b, 1998, 2000b, 2002; Oliver & Mackey, 2003; Philp, Oliver, & Mackey, 2008) opened up research on negotiation for meaning to children learning English as a Second Language (ESL). However, data from children learning English as a foreign language (EFL) remained non-existent until more recent research (Azkarai & Imaz Agirre, 2015; M.P. García Mayo & A. Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2015; Lázaro-Ibarrola & Azpilicueta-Martínez, 2015; Lázaro-Ibarrola & Hidalgo, 2017; Philp & Tognini, 2009; Tognini, 2008; Tognini & Oliver, 2012).

Yet, in spite of the long-researched age-related differences in SLA (Bialystok, 1997; Birdsong, 1999; Birdsong & Molis, 2001; Flege, Yeni-Komshian, & Liu, 1999; Snow & Hoefnagel-Höhle, 1978, to name but a few), few authors have attempted to identify the differences between adult and children interactions (Oliver, 1998) and even fewer have done so while including both age groups at similar levels of proficiency within the same study (Pinter, 2006). Finally, there are no studies – to our knowledge at the time of writing – specifically analysing and comparing negotiation of meaning strategies of children and adults with similar levels of proficiency

when interacting with i) peers and with ii) a proficient speaker, which we will analyse in this dissertation.

Thus, we hope to gain a deeper understanding of adult and children differences in the context of task-based interaction. At the same time, this study also constitutes an attempt to pave the way for future research in the field, since, unlike previous work on interaction analysing conversational strategies and L1 use (e.g., Lázaro-Ibarrola & Hidalgo, 2017), we will also delve into the participants' features and tactics regarding their ability to complete the task successfully, a field of growing interest (Cohen, 2003; P. Lloyd, 1990; Peter Lloyd, 1991; Oxford, 2003; Oxford, Cho, Leung, & Kim, 2004; Pinter, 2006), and the possible impact of such features in terms of the amount and type of interactions generated.

On the other hand, the analysis of paired interaction as a valid context for the assessment of speakers' proficiency in the target language at beginner level constitutes the second core element in this thesis. The interaction approach, alongside more end-of-the-20th-century findings on SLA (e.g., Output Hypothesis, Swain, 1985), was pivotal in the "shift from the view that speaking in a second language (L2) generally meant information transfer to an acknowledgement that speaking involved negotiating meaning" (Ducasse & Brown, 2009), a fact to which the field of Oral Proficiency Testing (OPT) was not at all oblivious. Such influence brought about the proliferation of the paired or 3-way interview layout, i.e., peer-peer interaction, as the OPT format of choice at the top levels of the Common European Framework of

Reference for Languages (CEFR) of English for general purposes in some of the most prestigious institutions worldwide, e.g., Cambridge University.

OPT has, in turn, been proven to have a significant impact on teaching practice, as Heaton rightly points out: "oral tests can have an excellent washback effect on the teaching that takes place prior to the tests" (Heaton, 1988, p. 89). Other researchers concur on the positive washback effect of oral tests on classroom teaching, since "practitioners place more emphasis on speaking, encouraging student oral production in class" (e.g., Bailey, 2005; Yoffee, 1997, p. 10).

At the same time, it is known that the assessment of productive skills in CLIL and immersion programmes is yielding comparatively lower levels of command (Pérez-Cañado, 2012) than those in receptive skills. Given the vertiginous growth rate of such programmes (Eurydice, 2006), the implications of the washback effect above mentioned could be of high interest.

One of the most robust claims discarding individual Oral Proficiency Interviews (OPI), i.e., test-taker – examiner interaction, in favour of the paired format lies in the notion that they "allow for the assessment of a broader range of skills than do the more traditional interviewer tests, in particular that they are more 'balanced (Együd & Glover, 2001) and interactive (Ffrench, 1999), with candidates producing a greater range of functions (Kormos, 1999; A.

Lazaraton, 2002) and interactional patterns being more varied (Saville & Hargreaves, 1999)" (in A. M. Ducasse & A. Brown, 2011).

However, whilst some researchers have found evidence to support such claims (L. Brooks, 2009; Galaczi, 2004, 2013), findings seem to focus on the upper levels of the CEFR. Conversely, there seems to be general – although underresearched - consensus as for the implementation of individual OPI as the norm at the lower levels (pre-A1 to A2). This fact is somewhat surprising given that less proficient learners are thought to need to negotiate more as a result of having greater difficulties to understand one another (Gass & Varonis, 1985a.; Oliver, 2002), and so higher levels of negotiation of meaning are to be expected from them, allowing for wider spectra of conversational features in their interaction. What is more, there is consistent research supporting the assumption that the amount of negotiation for meaning is inversely proportional to the interactants' levels of proficiency. (Oliver, 2002).

Nevertheless, the adequacy of interactive activities with very low level learners was recently called into question in a study by Lázaro-Ibarrola and Azpilicueta-Martínez (2015), whose results hinted at a minimum threshold level below which negotiation for meaning might be compromised. Consequently, it seems that the suitability and validity of either format – individual or paired- at the lower levels of the CEFR merits more exhaustive consideration and further research.

This dissertation intends to shed light on this unexplored field of work by analysing and comparing the duration, amount of production, turn-taking patterns and features of peer-peer interaction of A1 level-matched EFL children and adults, as well as their interactions with an expert.

In summary, this Thesis comprises two areas and has the following two interwoven objectives:(i) On the one hand it strives to examine the features of interaction of level-matched children and adults while performing the same tasks. For it, we will analyse their interactional patterns following Oliver's classification of conversational strategies (Oliver, 1998), as well as the influence of their shared L1 (Spanish), using a coding scheme that partially emerged from the data. We will also delve into the idiosyncrasies of children and adults' interactions regarding the tactics deployed, in addition to their ability to complete the tasks successfully.

(ii) The second objective of the present dissertation is to evaluate the suitability and validity of the paired OPT format, i.e., peer-peer, as a means to achieve a wide spectrum of language samples in the oral proficiency of A1 EFL children and adults. Following Brooks (2009), we will do so by supplementing the features of interaction mentioned above with other aspects of the learners' performance, such as duration, amount of production, i.e., number of utterances, and turn-taking patterns.

In order to attain these goals we analysed the interactions of 20 children aged 8 to 9 years old, and 14 adults with an age range between 31

and 69. All the participants shared the same proficiency level, A1 of the CEFR, and performed the same 4 tasks, 2 of them with a peer and 2 of them with a proficient speaker of English.

The tasks used include four two-way communicative activities in the form of story-based picture placement tasks, the four tasks followed the same procedure and only changed in that they used a different story although with a similar level of difficulty. All four tasks were carefully designed by the author of this thesis with the twofold aim of maximising oral output and generating negotiation.

The present dissertation is structured as follows: Chapter 1, *Literature Review*, comprises two sections, entitled *Interaction* (1.1.), and *Assessment of Oral Proficiency* (1.2.), respectively. The former serves as an overview of the Interaction Hypothesis (M.H. Long, 1996) framework (subsection 1.1.1.), and provides a synthesis of the most relevant research findings regarding the two population groups in this study, namely children and adults (1.1.2.). An additional subsection (1.1.3.) will be devoted to address the interlocutor variable (i.e., level and age), given its particular significance to the present work.

The second section (1.2.) will introduce research findings on the different age populations in the study, i.e., children and adults (1.2.1.).

Subsection 1.2.2. will delve into the two main formats[1] deployed in the assessment of oral proficiency today. The last part of the section (1.2.3.) will specifically cover an analysis of existing tasks in A1 oral tests at the present time, including a detailed justification for the design of the tasks in the present study.

Chapter 2, *The Study*, will introduce the research questions (2.1.) and the hypotheses entertained (2.2.), followed by a description of the participants (2.3.), tasks and materials involved in the study (2.4.), and will conclude by explaining the procedure (2.5.) and dissecting the data analysis and codification process followed (2.6.).

Chapter 3, *Results and Discussion*, will present and elucidate the results based on the research questions included in 2, whilst chapter 4 will explain the final conclusions and pedagogical implications derived from this dissertation, point out its limitations and suggest lines for further research.

[1] Given the interaction-based approach of this dissertation, computer-based assessment was deemed out of the scope of the present study.

Chapter 1. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will cover the theoretical underpinnings this dissertation rests on. It comprises two major fields of research, namely interaction and assessment. Section 1.1. *Interaction*, will provide an outline of the Interaction Hypothesis and its main tenets, with sub-sections placing a special emphasis on key elements to the present study. These will be followed by section 1.2., *Assessment of Oral Proficiency*, which, in turn, will include three sub-sections addressing different populations (1.2.1), formats (1.2.2.) and tasks (1.2.3.).

1.1 INTERACTION

This section provides a review of the Interaction Hypothesis (IH) (Long, 1983; 1985; 1996), the theoretical approach which this thesis is based on. The first part will be devoted to describing the Interaction Hypothesis and its main constructs, i.e., comprehensible input, modified output and feedback (subsection 1.1.1.). Subsequently, research findings regarding different age populations within IH will be contemplated (1.1.2.). The last part of the section will address the interlocutor variable, namely level and age, key elements to the present study (1.1.3).

1.1.1. The interactionist framework

The present subsection will start by offering a succinct overview of the history, central concepts and main studies underpinning IH (1.1.1.1). Subsequently, a second part will be devoted to explain and illustrate the current inventory of interaction strategies, paramount to the present study (1.1.1.2). We will conclude by focussing on additional, less known interaction-related aspects of interest to this dissertation (1.1.1.3).

1.1.1.1.History, tenets and main studies

The interaction approach, triggered by interaction-based research in second language acquisition[2] (SLA), has progressed rapidly since its first initial in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Original research on interaction was carried out by Michael Long (1980, 1981, 1983a, 1983b). Long's Interaction Hypothesis (IH) claims that second language acquisition (SLA) is promoted when conversational partners modify their interactions in order to prevent communication breakdowns (Long, 1996).

Such theory sparked a significant amount of research championing the positive impact of interaction on SLA (S.M. Gass & A. Mackey, 2007; M.H. Long, 1996; McDonough, 2006; McDonough & Mackey, 2006, to name but

[2] We would like to state that, while there is a crystal-clear distinction among some scholars as for the terms 'acquisition' and 'learning', i.e., the former referring to an unconscious process mirroring L1 acquisition and the latter being linked to a conscious effort on the side of the learner (Krashen, 1982 et passim), these differences are not substantial for the purpose of this thesis, so they will be used indistinctly for the sake of clarity.

a few recent studies), and has come to be thought of as an approach rather than a hypothesis today (S. M Gass & A. Mackey, 2007; Mackey, Abbuhl, & Gass, 2012). This is due to the fact that, while conducive to L2 learning, it is not considered to account for it wholly (H. D. Brown, 2000), and therefore it is viewed as a scheme which accommodates and supports a variety of different approaches to language acquisition (Mackey, 2012).

In its inception (M.H. Long, 1980, 1983a, 1983b), the Interaction Hypothesis borrowed from Krashen's Input Hypothesis on the impact of comprehensible input. Krashen's initial proposal of the Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1977, 1982, 1985) advocated that learners acquired languages when exposed to sufficient comprehensible input, being it the singular cause for acquisition to take place. So long as the input was comprehensible and constant, speech would eventually arise. In accordance with Krashen, such input had to be, to some degree, ahead of a person´s current level of competence (referred to as *i + 1* in his theory), since input solely containing language and patterns known to the learner would otherwise render it as useless and ineffective in terms of acquisition. If comprehensible input, therefore, was to lead to language acquisition, online, i.e., *face-to-face* conversational modifications or 'adjustments' aimed at making input comprehensible would also be conducive to language learning. This would be all the more significant in the case of SLA, since the number of conversational adjustments was found to be higher than in L1 interaction (M.H. Long, 1983a, 1983b).

Swain's coetaneous Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1985) stated that, while still necessary, input itself could not fully account for language acquisition. This claim was rooted in the author's knowledge of Canadian-French immersion programs, in which, notwithstanding years of exposure to comprehensible input, the performance of students lingered far behind in the productive skills, i.e., speaking and writing, when compared to the receptive skills, that is, reading and listening comprehension. This fact pushed her to contend that, while being a condition for acquisition, input alone could not explain it in its entirety, and that verbal output was also needed in order to augment accuracy and fluency in SLA. According to Swain's Output Hypothesis (1985) acquisition is facilitated when learners come across – *notice* - gaps in their linguistic knowledge of the second language (L2), and proposed three (3) functions of output (Swain, 1995):

- **Noticing function**: Learners notice a mismatch between what they want to convey and what they are able to say, and so become aware of their language lacunae (also in Adams & Ross-Feldman, 2008).
- **Hypothesis-testing function:** Learners 'test' via trial-and-error underlying hypotheses (e.g. about grammar) as they produce oral language. Based on the feedback they receive from their conversational partners, they are able to re-process such hypotheses when needed.

- **Metalinguistic function**: Language itself paves the way to learners' reflection on the language used by the teacher, their partners and learners themselves.

According to Swain (1985), when learners produce spoken L2, especially when they experience difficulty in communicating their meaning, they are pushed to modify and *stretch* their output, and, as a result, such output may become more target-like. This type of focus-on-form has been called incidental focus-on-form (M.H. Long, 1991, in Rahimian, 2013, p. 114). Consider example (1):

(1) NNS: *one bottle (1.0) and a keettle err a kittle*
NS: *a what?*
[Clarification request]
NNS: *a kittle*
NS: *what's that for?*
[Clarification request]
NNS: *for contain water (1.0)* ***a kettle a kettle*** [Modified output]
NS: *Ahah right yes (0.7) kettle that's a kettle*

(Shehadeh, 2001)

In the example above the NNS's hesitansy has led to a communication breakdown with their interlocutor. Note NNS's production of the target-like form after negotiation of meaning (hereinafter NoM) via clarification requests on the NS's part.

Output is, hence, a key element to SLA and constitutes one of the lynchpins to the Interaction Approach (M.H. Long, 1996; Swain, 1985). Still, a meta-analysis on interaction research in SLA by Mackey & Goo (2007) remarked the need for more specific research in order to examine the effects of output in SLA learning, given the fact that "it is a complex phenomenon affected by numerous variables, such as data elicitation tasks, the type of interlocutor, in addition to learner variables such as working memory and developmental level" (Ogino, 2012, p. 8). Apart from SLA contexts, comprehensible output (CO) has been found to be effective in elicitation of modified output (MO) in foreign language acquisition (FLA).

Likewise, as Rahimian points out, "the potential effects of producing L2 during negotiation of meaning in foreign language (FL) learning situations have not been explored enough, and the main focus of research has been on the interactions between native-nonnative speakers. Hence, nonnative-nonnative interaction is one of the sources of output production that has to be addressed in L2 research" (Rahimian, 2013, p. 115).

Linked to the Output Hypothesis and central to IH is Schmidt's (1990, 1992) Noticing Hypothesis. When learners modify their output, they may notice the difference between their own production (interlanguage) and the target language (TL) (R. Schmidt & Frota, 1986). This construct supports the notion that noticing is the necessary and sufficient condition to convert input into intake (R. W. Schmidt, 1990, p. 129, in Azkarai, 2013). Since intake is, by definition, the information that can subsequently be used for acquisition,

the conversion of input to intake is pivotal to SLA (Truscott & Sharwood Smith, 2011). The Noticing Hypothesis basically states that "SLA is largely driven by what learners pay attention to and notice in target language input and what they understand the significance of noticed input to be" (R. W. Schmidt, 1990, 1992, 1995a, 1998; 2001, pp. 4,5.).

As a result of the instant pressures of spontaneous communication in tasks, learners have to focus on form and meaning at the same time. Given that humans' processing capacity is limited (Anderson, 2000) and that meaning is prioritized over form (VanPatten, 1990), shifting learners' attention to focus on linguistic forms has become a major concern in language research.

During NoM, interlocutors are highly likely to -consciously or not- draw their attention to the form of the language at hand, i.e. they are bound to some kind of noticing. Long (1996) refers to this focus on form (FonF) as interactional moves directed at raising learners' awareness of form. Since noticing is also a key factor in SLA (R. W. Schmidt, 1995b), such element may also accumulate to the list of factors that make interaction beneficial. NoM, therefore, affects attention to form, which is necessary to get learners to produce more target-like utterances (Pica, 1994, 2013). The potential of NoM and FonF has also been the object of study in contexts other than face-to-face interaction recently (Bueno Alastuey, 2012).

Noticing, input and intake are, on many occasions, intended to be generated via another central construct to the IH: feedback. Feedback in SLA in its numerous forms has been the object of a significant bulk of research (D. Brown, 2016; M.H. Long, Inagaki, & Ortega, 1998; Nassaji, 2014; Zhang & Rahimi, 2014, to name but a few). While children appear to be able to acquire the adult form of an L1 with little or no explicit feedback (Lightbown & Spada, 2006), its role in the case of L2 or FL learners seems far more complex, and appears to be affected by factors such as age, learning contexts and individual differences. This fact may contribute to the lack of consensus amongst scholars as regards the effectiveness of feedback on FL learners, despite the abundant amount of research on the subject.

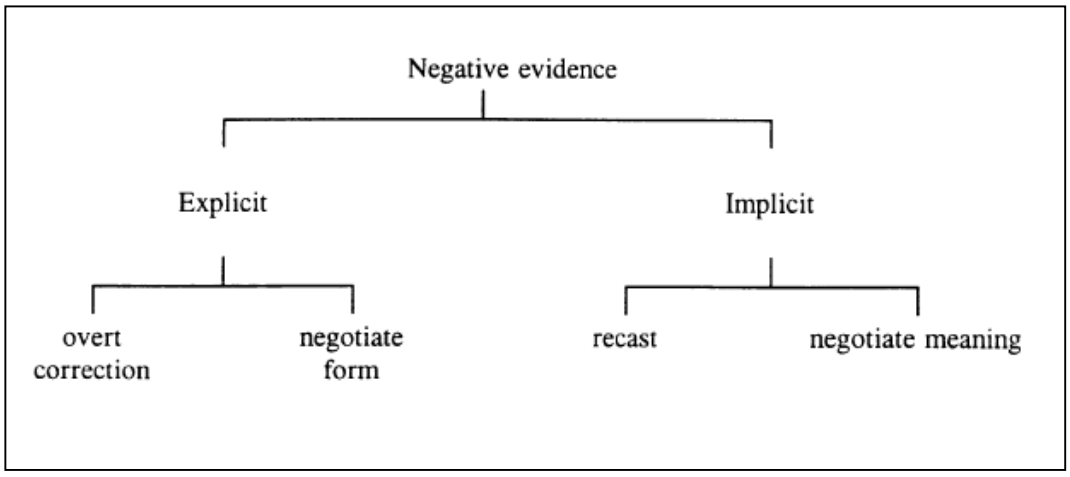
Corrective feedback may be broadly categorised into implicit or explicit. The former comprises NoM strategies, namely conversational adjustments (object of the present study), as well as recasts, while the latter implies indicating that what the interlocutor has said was incorrect, as well as providing the 'right' linguistic form. Some authors (Van den Branden, 1997) also include negotiation of form (NoF) as a type of corrective 'negative' feedback. It refers to those negotiations which are not overtly meaning-focussed, or triggered by a lack of comprehension, but rather 'didactic' in their function, i.e., drawing the interlocutor's attention to the form of the utterance without providing the 'correct' form. Consider the following example by Van den Branden (1997) (2):

(2) T: *What did he do next?*
P1: *He breaked his leg.*
T: ***Yes, that's right, but, breaked, breaked, breaked, is that correct, breaked?*** [NoF]
P1: ***Uhm… broke!***
[NoF]
T: *Broke, right.*

(Van den Branden, 1997, p. 592)

Note the teacher 'pushing' her interlocutor towards a more target-like form – successfully, on this occasion.

As a result, corrective feedback may be categorised as follows:



(Van den Branden, 1997, p. 593)

Regarding recasts, they are, in Long's words:

"a reformulation of all or part of a learner's immediately preceding utterance in which one or more non-target like (lexical, grammatical etc.) items are replaced by the corresponding target language form(s), and where, throughout

the exchange, the focus of the interlocutors is on *meaning* not language as an object" (M.H. Long, 2007, p. 2).

An example of recasting can be seen below (3):

(3) S1: *Why you don't like Marc?*
T: ***Why don't you** like Marc?*
[Recast]
S2: *I don't know, I don't like him.*

(Lightbown & Spada, 2006)

Note student 1's lack of uptake, i.e., an immediate response to the feedback provided by the teacher; in this case the recast provided appears to focus purely on meaning, hence student 2's meaning-focussed reply.

There is no agreement among researchers as for the effectiveness of recasts. Long believes recasts work for acquisition precisely because "they are implicit, connecting linguistic form to meaning in discourse contexts that promote the microprocessing (i.e., noticing or rehearsing in short-term memory) required for implicit language learning" (Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006, p. 341). Lyster and Ranta, on the other hand, carried out a study (1997) whose findings suggested that content-based instruction (for example, immersion classes) and communicative instruction with younger learners would benefit more from explicit forms of feedback rather than through the provision of recasts (R. Lyster, Ranta, L., 1997).

Consider the following example (4) of feedback in the form of an explicit correction between young level-matched peers:

(4) Learner A: *Where? Where is my birthday?*
Learner B: *No, that's* ***when***. [Explicit correction]

(Lázaro-Ibarrola & Azpilicueta-Martínez, 2015)

Still, feedback itself , as well as compresensible input and comprehensible output in isolation cannot be conceived, they can only be fully understood as interwoven and jointly affecting SLA in the context of communicative tasks. Consequently, Long's subsequent version of the IH (1996) went on to connect input, internal learner capacities - particularly selective attention- and output in productive ways via NoM. (M.H. Long, 1996, pp. 451, 452), something that particularly facilitates language acquisition.

To sum up, the IH contends that the effectiveness of comprehensible input is significantly increased when learners need to negotiate for meaning. This concept has been defined as "the process whereby interactions are modified between or amongst conversational partners to help overcome communication breakdowns" (M.H. Long, 1983a; M.H. Long & Porter, 1985; Oliver, 1998, p. 373; P. A. Porter, 1986). In other words, NoM is a process that speakers go through in order to reach a clear understanding of each other.

We would like to conclude this section by summarising two interaction – based meta-analyses supporting the benefits of interaction in L2 learning. Keck et al. (2006) focussed on the link between task-based interaction and the acquisition of grammatical and lexical L2 features by analysing the findings of 14 task-based interaction studies published between 1994 and 2003. They established that treatment groups outperformed both the control and comparison groups, supporting the fact that task-based interaction accounts for a beneficial effect on language acquisition.

Equally relevant, their findings also indicate that tasks requiring the use of a specific language feature are more effective in promoting acquisition, in turn leading to larger effects over time than those in which a target feature is useful but not essential. Similarly, this meta-analysis also suggests that opportunities for pushed output achieve larger effects on acquisition, in the same line of thought as Swain's (1985, 2005) Output Hypothesis. Still, as the authors themselves explicitly remark, caution should be exercised when deriving pedagogical implications from their meta-analysis, warning of the importance of 'replicating' treatment designs in classroom settings, with learner-learner groups in order to better determine the role of student interaction in SL/FL learning.

Likewise, Mackey and Goo's (2007) meta-analysis also addresses the influence of negotiated interaction on SLA, with their main findings concurring with those by Keck et al. (2006), thus confirming the facilitative role of interaction in SLA. Mackey and Goo (2007) reviewed 28 studies

published between the early 90s and 2006, some of them shared by Keck et al.'s (2006) previously mentioned work. In Mackey and Goo's, interaction is reported to produce a significantly positive short and long term effect on language learning. More specifically, their findings stated that the lexicon was to reflect a more significant impact in the short-term whilst grammar would do so in the long-run.

In this subsection we have focussed on the theory behind IH, its main constructs and some of the most relevant research studies supporting them to date. Subsection 2 will be devoted to illustrate and explain NoM strategies in detail.

1.1.1.2.Interaction strategies

Although NoM strategies may be parsed in diverse ways, we have followed Oliver's (1998) canonical inventory of strategies, which comprises conversational adjustments and forms of repetition. This notwithstanding, we will also touch on some of the most recent contributions in the area. Finally, and in the same line as recent EFL studies on interaction (e.g., Azkarai & Imaz Agirre, 2015; M.P. García Mayo & A. Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2015; Tognini & Oliver, 2012), the influence of the L1 will also be addressed.

During NoM, interlocutors display three main types of interactional modifications (for a meta-analysis, see Mackey & Goo, 2007):

- modifications to achieve comprehensible input (M.H. Long, 1983b; Pica, 1987, 1992)
- modifications to produce comprehensible output (Swain, 1985, 1995) and
- provision of feedback to trigger the corresponding modifications.

Thus, NoM comprises a range of converstational adjustments which might imply repeating what has been said, rephrasing ideas differently, asking conversational partners for repetition or clarification, confirming whether they are keeping track of the conversation, ensuring that their interlocutor comprehends, recasting or correcting what has been said, etc.,

As Oliver acknowledges, NoM may be categorised in several ways. One of the most recent contributions in this respect is Lázaro Ibarrola and Hidalgo's (2017) new categorisation for NoM strategies. They do so by shifting the focus from type of strategy to function, leading to the following typology of strategies:

Strategies ***to prevent communication breakdowns***, used by the speaker in order to make sure the interlocutor understands what has been said. They include c*omprehension checks* and *mere self-repetitions* (comprising 'self' and 'other' repetition).

Strategies ***to confirm successful communication***, used by the speaker to ratify comprehension of the previous utterance. This category holds speakers' *acknowledgements*[3] of understanding and u*tterance completions.* 'Acknowledgements' have also been referred to as 'confirmation of comprehension' (a type of 'listener support moves') in categorizations regarding interactional competence across levels in assessment-related research, such as that by E.D. Galaczi (2013).

Strategies ***to repair communication breakdowns***, used by the listener to express that they have (fully or partly) failed to understand what the speaker just said. These include *clarification requests,* c*onfirmation checks* and 'self' repetitions.

Strategies ***to focus on form***, aimed at informing the speaker that the previous utterance does not conform to the target language standard. These would include *explicit corrections* or implicit forms (*corrective recasts*). On these occasions, the error might or might not have caused a communication breakdown.

(Lázaro Ibarrola and Hidalgo (2017)

For the sake of the present study, we followed Oliver's (1998) classification of NoM features, owing to the fact that they are "the most

[3] At this point it is relevent to add that acknowledgements, on occasions, might constitute 'fake' signals of comprehension, and they might be used simply to feign understanding (Aston, 1986; Hawkins, 1985), the nature of which exceeds the present study.

representative of analyses undertaken and adult studies and, therefore, most useful for comparison (with children)" (Oliver, 1998, p. 375). Such categorization seems bespoke for the present work, since it attempts to compare different-age populations within the same study. It includes i) conversational adjustments and different forms of ii) repetition. We have also borrowed from Lázaro Ibarrola and Hidalgo and added iii) *acknowledgements* as a third element for analysis.

In what follows, Oliver's description of each feature, as well as examples from the present study will be presented:

1) Conversational adjustments

a) Clarification requests:

These feature comprises "those utterances made by the listener to clarify what the speaker had said, and included statements such as "I don't understand," wh- questions, yes/no questions, and tag questions" (M.H. Long, 1980, 1983b; Pica & Doughty, 1985b; in Oliver, 1998), as in example (5):

(5) Student B: *The jacket is brown the boy and… I think is the… white. The… the girl.*
Student A: ***What?***
[Clarification request]

Student A fails to understand Student B's description and requests clarification, i.e., asks him to modify his output in order to get comprehensible input.

b) Confirmation checks:

They include "those utterances made by the listener to establish that the preceding utterance had been heard and understood correctly, but they included repetition of all or part of the utterance accompanied by rising intonation" (M.H. Long, 1980, 1983b; Pica & Doughty, 1985b; in Oliver, 1998). Consider example (6):

(6) Researcher: *No, no, no, they're playing on the floor, on the floor.*
Student A: ***On the floor?***
[Confirmation check]

Note Student A's repetition of the part of the Researcher's utterance in order to ensure she has understood the input well.

c) Comprehension checks

This adjustment covers "those utterances made by the speaker to check whether a preceding utterance had been correctly understood by the listener and consisted primarily of questions, either tag questions, repetition with rising intonation, or questions such as *"Do you*

understand?" (M.H. Long, 1980, 1983b; Pica & Doughty, 1985b; in Oliver, 1998). This is shown in the example below (7):

(7) Student A: *In one picture there is a boy that has… the…. The mouth with… This.* ***You understand?***
[Comprehension check]

Student A uses the utterance above to check her counterpart has understood the message she wanted to convey.

2) Repetition

a) Self-repetition

This consists of "the speaker's partial and exact repetitions of lexical items from their own preceding utterances within five speaking turns. It also included expanded forms of a speaker's own utterances" (Pica & Doughty, 1985b; in Oliver, 1998). These are illustrated in the examples below:

b) Partial

(8) Student A: *There are in the toyshop.*
Student B: *Ok, the next.*
Student A: *They go to the bookshop and the girl and boy they are sleeping but they are thinking* ***in the toyshop.*** [Self-repetition: partial]

i) Exact

(9) Student B: *There are thinking in the toyshop or in a sandwich?*
Student A: *What, what?*
Student B: ***There are thinking in the toyshop or… or in a sandwich?***
[Self-repetition: exact]

ii) Expanded

(10) Student A: *In the first picture…*
Researcher: *Yes.*
Student A: ***In the first picture is there a cat?***
[Self-repetition: expanded]

c) Other-repetition

These included partial, exact and expanded repetitions of lexical items from an interlocutor's preceding utterances within five speaking turns (Pica & Doughty, 1985b; in Oliver, 1998). An example of each is provided:

i) Partial

(11) Student A: *Is he sitting or standing?*
Student B: ***Sitting.*** [Other-repetition: partial]

ii) Exact

(12) Researcher: *Only one and two.*
Student A: ***Only one and two.*** [Other-repetition: exact]

iii) Expanded

(13) Student A: *The hat in, in… his… 'bufanda'?*
Researcher: *The scarf?*
Student A: ***The scarf in his scarf to the… snowdoll.***
[Other-repetition: expanded]

As mentioned above, we have also included 'acknowledgements' as an additional strategy worth considering for the present study. Although named differently, this type of strategy as also been referred to by different scholars as "what takes place when a supportive listener in a pair offers verbal signs of comprehension or provides audible support to the speaker." (Ducasse, 2008, p. 94), or as "evidence of the ability of the listener to monitor what is being said" (Galaczi, 2013, p. 567). Lázaro Ibarrola and Hidalgo (2017) emphasize the functional raison d'être behind this type of strategy, that is, to provide confirmation to their interlocutor that the previous utterance has been understood.

d) Acknowledgements

(14) Student A: *Erm… the… are two pictures… are two pictures the same. One, the… first picture it ha, the boy it's sad and the girl is sad, and the second is with the… with the… with the mouth a little bit… erm… a little bit… straight.*
Student B: ***Yes, is that.***
[Acknowledgement]

In addition to the above, research in FL contexts has also focussed on one more interaction strategy: L1 use. This phenomenon appears to be widespread both in formal and informal interaction between child and adult peers in conventional classroom SLA contexts (Tognini & Oliver, 2012), and previous research has hinted at low-proficiency learners in FL classrooms resorting to their L1 instead of using the TL (Alegría de la Colina & García

Mayo, 2009; DiCamilla & Antón, 2012; Tognini & Oliver, 2012). Regarding different age groups, a study comparing adult and children interactions by Pinter (2006) documented a significantly higher proportion of the latter's turns containing explicit L1 terms: 15% in the case of children, as opposed to the adults' 3%.

It is relevant to note how research within the interactionist framework has traditionally tended to limit L1 use to isolated lexical items. By contrast, more recent studies on EFL children interaction have highlighted the scant use of such explicit L1 instances in their output (Lázaro-Ibarrola & Azpilicueta-Martínez, 2015), yet do point to the existence of a significant amount of L1 influence via an underlying structural transfer (Lázaro-Ibarrola & Hidalgo, 2017). In line with these studies, the present thesis will also investigate the extent to which Spanish as a common L1 may permeate –in the form of explicit lexical items or an underlying morphology and syntax (Llinas-Grau, Pladevall, & Capdevila, 2013)- children's and adults' output in English[4].

1.1.1.3.Additional insights

In the present subsection we will focus on several studies analyzing additional, less known factors relating to interaction in SLA, of interest to this

4 See section 2.6. Data analysis and codification for more comprehensive details.

dissertation. We hope they will go some way towards supplementing the *de rigueur* features mentioned in the previous subsection with added insight.

In addition to NoF and NoM, Van den Branden (1997) focussed on Negotiation of content (NoC) in speaking tasks involving description (similar, in a way, to the tasks at the present study). NoC comprises 'stretches of information aimed at pushing the speaker (Describer[5]) to provide more information than spontaneously offered in the description, like the following examples illustrate.

(15) D: *She was pushing her bike with the flat tire.*
L: ***And was it still raining?***
[NoC]
D: *Yes.*

(Van den Branden, 1997, p. 605)

(16) Student A: *And in the third picture, in the picture number three they are thinking too in the toyshop.*
Student B: ***Ok. Mmm… and… the boy is, erm… on the left, on the right? Or on the right?***
[NoC]
Student A: *In the middle.*

(Example from the present study)

[5] We might safely establish an analogy between the 'Listener'-'Describer' roles assigned in Van den Branden's study with the 'Story Builder' – 'Narrator' ones in the present tasks (see *3.4.Tasks and materials* for a detailed description).

Note the task-elicited nature of this type of negotiation, which calls our attention to the fact that, while some interactional features might be common to any task, some others are rather task-specific.

A further aspect of interest to this thesis has to do with the impact of participation patterns, i.e., dyad, group and teacher-fronted layouts on interaction. A study with ESL intermediate adult students and teachers by Doughty and Pica (1986) explored, *inter alia*, participation patterns under an information exchange task while comparing the interaction modes previously mentioned. Their results were highly interesting: While a required information exchange task compelled students to talk more (if compared with optional exchange information tasks) in either a teacher-fronted or a group situation, such increase in total production only implied an increase of modified interaction when students worked in groups and dyads (Doughty & Pica, 1986).

Subsequent studies by Foster (1998) and Eckerth (2009), by contrast, could not confirm the determining effect of task type (required vs. optional information exchange) on the amount of language production and NoM established by Pica & Doughty's earlier studies (1985, 1987). Rather on the contrary, Foster's results highlighted the overriding role of participation patterns over task type, since the most frequent occurrence of output modification took place in dyad settings (as opposed to group work), irrespective of task type.

In the same line of thought, Eckerth's findings also supported the assumption that a dyadic setting is both more likely to lead to a symmetric distribution of speech and negotiation, since, in his view, "it is much harder for a single student to retreat or to drop out of the communication" in a dyad, as opposed to a small group" (Eckerth, 2009, p. 121).

Foster and Eckerth believe the reason for tasks having less of an effect on language production and NoM was down to learners deploying a strategy that "could reduce some information exchange tasks to a format whereby the side holding the information need only answer yes or no to the informed guesses of the other side" (Foster, 1998, p. 11).

In spite of the above, nevertheless, an important finding in both studies were the wide breaches found in the production and amount of negotiation between different individuals, to the extent that Foster advised against statistics based on group totals in her study, given the high heterogeneity. Eckerth concurs when reporting the same dyad consistently talked, negotiated and modified their output more than all others, rather independently of task type (Eckerth, 2009).

We will finally touch on work by Nakahama, Tyler, and Van Lier (2001). In their study with three L1-Japanese intermediate ESL students, they delved into how meaning is negotiated in two different types of interactions between native speakers and non-native speakers, a similar mode to one of the interaction formats in the present study (the so-called individual OPT

format). More particularly, they compared NoM in a spot-the-difference task (Ur, 1981) with NoM in a relatively unstructured conversation.

Their results supported the assumption that, at that level, even though conversational interaction offered fewer instances of repair negotiation in the traditional sense than the information gap activity, that type of interaction has the potential to offer valuable learning opportunities at multiple levels of interaction.

In addition, participants in the study by Nakahama et al. "found the conversational activity to be more challenging than the information-gap activity because they had to pay attention to the entire discourse in the former but mainly focused on lexical items in the latter" (Nakahama et al., 2001, abstract). These authors pointed at the NoM in conversational interaction leading to less local, more 'overall' coherence in the entire interaction. They link this to the fact that, unlike task-based interactions, conversational interaction forces speakers to pay attention to the ongoing flow of the dialogue or to the co-constructed meanings accumulated during its course, a burden which they reckon task-based interaction 'frees' speakers (native or non-native) from, given that it is the information-gap activity that controls the discourse.

We believe their findings have important implications in the analysis of NoM at different levels and ages, since, what could be seen as an advantage in terms of a cognitive or linguistic demand, i.e., conversational activities

being more challenging than information-gap activities (at intermediate ESL level), might be far beyond the linguistic and/or cognitive level of lower level students, such as EFL beginners, even more so with young learners. It also seems logical that the NoM-triggering effectiveness of either activity might be closely related to the specific particularities and characteristics of the task at hand.

Their study (as do Doughty & Pica, Foster and Eckerth) raises interesting questions as for the suitability of different interaction modalities, regarding both the pairing of the students and the nature of the activity at hand, and point at the need for further research in order to throw light at the amount and type of production and NoM to be expected in each of them.

In conclusion, the present subsection has alluded to less known, but equally interesting aspects to interaction of relevance to the present dissertation. As has been pointed out, the applicability of some of the findings above might vary depending on the populations at hand, a factor we will address in the following section.

1.1.2. Children vs adults

In this subsection we will refer to considerations regarding interaction-based research on adults and children. Information on the special characteristics of children the age of participants in the present study will also

be presented. This will be followed by findings on the commonalities and differences of interactional patterns and task-solving tactics carried out with both populations.

Early research on the value of interaction for L2 acquisition focussed on adult learners (e.g. Gass & Varonis, 1985a.; Pica & Doughty, 1985b; P. A. Porter, 1986; Yule & Macdonald, 1990). Subsequent studies by Alison Mackey and Rhonda Oliver (Mackey & Oliver, 2002; Mackey et al., 2003; Oliver, 1995a, 1995b, 1998, 2000b, 2002; Oliver & Mackey, 2003; Philp et al., 2008), opened up research on negotiation of meaning to ESL children, yet still, data from children learning English as a foreign language (henceforth EFL) remained non-existent until more recent research (M.P. García Mayo & A. Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2015; Lázaro-Ibarrola & Azpilicueta-Martínez, 2015; Philp & Tognini, 2009; Tognini, 2008; Tognini & Oliver, 2012).

While learner age appears to be a significant variable and children seem to handle their interactions somewhat differently from adults, research findings on interaction with adults have been regularly applied to children studies with little to no adaptations. This might be attributed to a drought of children studies and the fact their results were mixed (Mackey & Silver, 2005; K. a. O. Mackey, 2007). However, significant differences between adults and children in their SLA (Birdsong & Molis, 2001; Flege et al., 1999; D.M. Singleton & Lengyel, 1995; D.M. Singleton & Ryan, 2004, among many others) suggest that the unique psychological, social and linguistic traits characteristic of children will also bring about weighty differences when

comparing their interactions with those of adults. Hence Mackey and Silver's (2005) assertion that SLA research findings ought not to be generalised to children without adequate empirical evidence (Mackey & Silver, 2005).

Some of these unique features refer to children as being "less metalinguistically and sociolinguistically aware (Harley, 1986; Scarcella & Higa, 1981), as well as having "less developed memory heuristics, and different underlying experiences and cognitive abilities (Ervin-Tripp, 1981 in Oliver, 1998: 373).

Childhood, in fact, should not be viewed as a uniform stage, since children's social and cognitive skills undergo a swift development, and they display different traits as they mature. Berk (2006), establishes a 3-stage sequence related to the development of different ways of thinking: early childhood (ages 2-7), middle childhood (ages 7-11) and early adolescence (ages 12-14). An example of this is the fact that children's overall ability to take their partner's needs in peer-peer interaction is not homogenous and grows with age (Azmitia, 1988), as does the ability to take full responsibility for their own utterances and understand their partners' (Pinter, 2007).

In middle childhood (ages 7-11), the age range the learners in the present study have accessed, children have not fully developed abstract thinking yet, but are already capable of thinking symbolically and logically, and begin to conceive and recognise others' perspectives. From a linguistic perspective, children at this point are becoming increasingly aware of

pragmatics, and are developing greater metalinguistic awareness than their younger peers (Philp et al., 2008). Consequently, what would otherwise appear as too formal and cognitively demanding a task for early-childhood learners, may be achievable and valuable for those entering middle childhood.

Studies such as those by Lloyd (1990, 1991) suggest that adults' and 10-year-olds' performances are 'very similar' when interacting on referential tasks. In them, children managed to "provide communicative support to each other through setting up premises with care and sensitivity to their partners' needs, through drawing their partners' attention to information that is lacking and through presenting the information to their partners in manageable chunks" (Pinter, 2006, p. 617).

On the other hand, there is scientific evidence supporting the notion that even 10-11-year-old children learners still show some fragility as conversational partners, and that this may have an impact on their performance in speaking tasks (Clark, 1978; Halliday, 1975; Karmiloff-Smith, 1992; Romaine, 1984). In the same line of thought, Menyuk and Brisk (2005) suggest that conversational interaction in the 9-to-13-year old bracket is "still far from being lengthy or fully responsive to what has been said previously" (Menyuk & Brisk, 2005, p. 120). Likewise, it is known that children often rely on adults to manage conversations for them[6] (Scarcella & Higa, 1981).

[6] Based on research in L1 development.

Certainly some of the most significant findings analysing the advantageous effects of interactive tasks lie with Oliver's interactional research addressing different populations (Oliver, 1995a, 1995b, 1998, 2000a, 2002). In a study carried out in 2002, she analysed extensive data comprising conversational interactions of 192 ESL (learning English in an English-speaking country- Australia) children aged 8-13, paired off into 96 dyads. She stated that, in spite of age-related limitations, children managed to interact and successfully engage in conversational interaction cooperatively.

Compared interactional patterns of children and adults show how both populations benefit from comprehensible input, produce comprehensible output and receive feedback on their performance. Oliver reveals that, while children and adults do make use of the same types of strategies, they do so at different rates, the most significant divergence being children's lower use of comprehension checks. This discrepancy is increased when children are younger and includes not only fewer comprehension checks, but also lower levels of repetition of their partners' utterances (Oliver, 2008). The same author had already touched on the subject in her previous work: "possibly because of their level of development and their purported egocentric nature, primary school children tend to focus on constructing their own meaning, and less on facilitating their partners' construction of meaning" (Oliver, 1998, p. 379).

While Oliver's findings circumscribe discrepancies to comprehension checks –and repetition in the case of younger learners- an earlier study carried

out with 40 English-L1 children aged 5 to 10 learning Japanese in an immersion programme by Carpenter et al (1995) had pointed at other conversational adjustments, namely clarification requests, as been non-existent in their data:

> " (…) by and large, even confident and relatively proficient children do not manage conversations in the way that many adults are believed to. That is, none of the forty children (in their study) gave any deliberate explicit signals that they had not understood something the tester said. None of the children said anything like ***'I don't understand'*** or ***'Could you repeat that?'*** or ***'Could you speak slower?*** (…)"
>
> (Carpenter, Fujii, & Kataoka, 1995, p. 172).

Carpenter et al's (1995) study pointed at a highly interesting distinctive feature of children (ages 5-10) and adults. It suggested that adult learners behave like more of a risk-taker, since they tend to happily start utterances even if unsure as to how to continue, while children may not be willing to contribute interactions when they are not fully sure about what they are going to say.

In order to shed more light on this issue, Pinter (2006) compared the task-related strategies of 10 and 5 dyads of Hungarian children (aged 10) and adult EFL beginners /post-beginners respectively, while interacting in a classic (spot-the-difference referential) information gap task. Pinter's study

provided valuable insights regarding task-solving strategy use; in fact, children made use of a more 'haphazard' strategic approach when dealing with the task, i.e., adults were more consistent by keeping a verbal tally of the differences, searching for them systematically, e.g., front to bottom, plus including "a great deal of checking and monitoring of their interactions (including profuse repetition and co-construction of utterances)" (Pinter, 2006, p. 620).

As for the amount of time and language produced her findings are highly revealing: children used less time and less language than the adults to complete the task, including resorting to mere one-word responses to their partner's utterances. Equally interesting was the fact that such low production was associated to the children's more haphazard strategic approach to the task itself, in turn accounting for a lower percentage of differences spotted. Another aspect that differentiated both groups was the L1, more abundant in child pairs. This can all be noted in the chart below:

Figure 1. Children and adult speakers. Results in Pinter (2006)

Children and adult speakers: their last English performances

Average figures	Words per task	Turns per task	Turns that contain L1	Differences found
Child pairs (last English performance)	126	21	15%	2.8
Adult pairs (last English performance)	170	45	3%	5.5

As can be seen, the number of interaction-based studies specifically comparing children and adult populations is far from copious, and findings ought to be taken with caution. We hope the present study will throw light on this field of unquestionable interest.

1.1.3. The interlocutor variable: level and age

One of the factors subject to exert influence on the amount and type of interaction in an SL or FL is the interlocutor variable. More specifically, McNamara highlights how "the age, sex, educational level, proficiency or native speaker status and personal qualities of the interlocutor relative to the same qualities in the candidate are all likely to be significant in influencing the candidate's performance" (McNamara, 1996, p. 86).

Some of the sub-variables which have been the foci of abundant research are the following: age (Buckingham, 1997; B. O'Sullivan, 1995; B. O'Sullivan & Porter, 1995), gender (Berry, 1997b; A. Brown & McNamara, 2004; Buckingham, 1997; Locke, 1984; O'Sullivan & Porter, 1996; D. Porter, 1991a, 1991b; D. Porter & Shen, 1991), interaction style (D. Porter & Shen, 1991), interaction level (Davis, 2009; Iwashita, 1996; Nakatsuhara, 2006; Norton, 2005), cultural background (Young & Halleck, 1998), personality (Berry, 1997b; D. Porter, 1991a), status (D. Porter & Shen, 1991), personality (Berry, 1997b), acquaintanceship (B. O'Sullivan, 2002) and even examiner's

behaviour (A. B. Brown, 2003; Lumley & Brown, 1996; O'Sullivan, 2000; S. J. Ross, 1992, in Brooks, 2009), to name but some.

Yet, in spite of the above, findings, as some authors explain, "have at times been contradictory, suggesting that it is not possible to establish a direct and predictable effect of interlocutor variables on test performance and outcomes" (Chambers, Galaczi, & Gilbert, 2012, abstract). In the present section the roles of level of proficiency and age will be considered. Most of the relevant information regarding age has already been mentioned in the previous section. Here, we will only refer to studies in which age is particularly relevant in combination with proficiency, namely in teacher-child/student interactions.

While peer–peer L2 interaction involving different proficiency learners in the classroom is frequent today, there is surprisingly little research documenting how learners with different proficiency levels interact with one another, and whether such a grouping is useful for L2 learning (Watanabe & Swain, 2007).

Different scholars have hinted at the level of proficiency impinging on the amount of NoM (Ellis, 1985; Gaies, 1982; Shortreed, 1993, in Oliver, 2002: 99). They state that more proficient learners need to negotiate less on the grounds that they come across fewer communication breakdowns. By contrast, less proficient users may need to negotiate more as a consequence of the obstacles they find in order to understand each other (Gass & Varonis,

1985a.; Oliver, 2002). Results in Oliver's 2002 study with children contrasted with those in previous adult studies, since age and gender comparisons showed no significant differences; in Oliver's words "the general trend with respect to language proficiency was that the least native-like pairs (i.e., matched low proficiency nonnative dyads) produced the most amount of negotiation, with gradually decreasing amounts as the pairings became more native-like in proficiency" (Oliver, 2002, p. abstract). She went on to propose the following ranking (NS=native speaker).

Low-Low>High-Low>High-High>Low-NS>High-NS>NS-NS
(Oliver, 2002, pp. abstract, 97)

However, research by Lyster and Izquierdo calls to question the suitability of content-based tasks with young children whose command of the target language might be too low (R. Lyster, 2001; R. Lyster & Izquierdo, 2009). An empirical study by Lyster (2001) on the provision of feedback with young students (ages 8-10) learning French in an immersion context, claims that, in communicatively oriented classrooms " young L2 learners may not readily notice target-non target mismatches in the interactional input" (R. Lyster, 2001, p. 268). Lyster's study, therefore, seems to indicate that children are perhaps able to interact but may not do so in a way that promotes accuracy.

A recent study on negotiation of meaning with young EFL beginners by Lázaro-Ibarrola and Azpilicueta-Martínez, 2015, combining age (children)

and low proficiency, suggested that low proficiency students might yield more interaction only when participants appear to have gone past a minimum threshold level of the target language, below which learners, or at least child learners-, would hardly be able to use interaction strategies in order to achieve mutual understanding; they referred to them as VL (VL=Very Low) learners and added them to Oliver's original classification:

L-L>H-L>H-H>L-NS>H-NS>NS-NS > VL-VL

(Oliver, 2002) (Lázaro-Ibarrola & Azpilicueta-Martínez, 2015)

Such findings cast doubt on the suitability of interactive activities with learners who possessed two limiting features: they were very young and showed very low proficiency levels.

Regarding different proficiency levels within the same pair, i.e., the effect of interlocutor proficiency on a pair's performance in interaction, the research so far has yielded mixed results. The following includes reference to three studies which somehow pertain to the field of interaction and assessment; since these areas overlap in the present thesis it was deemed appropriate to include them in the present section.

A study by Iwashita (1996) noticed differences in both scores and language production of learners of Japanese. Students were placed into level-matched groups (high and low proficiency respectively), and then tested once

with a level-matched interlocutor and then again with a partner of different proficiency level (higher or lower). Her results indicated that interlocutor proficiency may have an impact on both the amount of talk produced and, perhaps the nature of the discourse too, influencing the scores received in a speaking task. As a matter of fact, learners paired with a higher-proficiency interlocutor had an increase in mean score of 53% (9.3 vs. 6.1) while higher-proficiency students had an increment of 13% (26.2 vs. 22.9 out of 28 points). However, her results ought to be interpreted with caution, as Davis (2009) points out, "the statistical significance of this effect is unclear because no inferential statistics were applied to the data" (Davis, 2009, p. 370). This same author carried out another study with learners of Japanese as a foreign language paired in similar and mixed proficiency groups (Iwashita, 2001). While she found no significant differences in the types of negotiation moves, she noted that there was a high level of confirmation checks (consisting of 'other'-repetitions of part of their interlocutors' sentences) in all groups. This author suggests that this is the easiest strategy for lower level students, since they do not have to produce their own language.

Work by Nakatsuhara (2004), by contrast, focussed on the discourse generated by several combinations of higher- and lower-proficiency candidates performing a problem-solving task and found no differences in the features such as interactional contingency, goal orientation, and quantitative dominance. She concluded that, in general terms, differences in proficiency level amongst participants had no significant effect on conversation type,

although, mixed-level parings (higher- and lower-proficiency individuals) brought about more language and initiated more topics on the part of the higher proficiency learner.

A study carried out by Davis (2009) analysed the influence of interlocutor proficiency on speaking performance in a group of 20 students at a Chinese university. They were categorised into groups of relatively high and low English proficiency and tested once with a level-matched partner and again with an interlocutor of higher or lower proficiency. Interlocutor proficiency level had "no observable effect on Rasch analysis ability measures, but lower-level examinees produced more language (words) when working with a higher-level partner" (Davis, 2009, p. abstract).

Of particular relevance to the present study is the fact that, while most dyads in Davis' study produced collaborative interactions, when a learner was paired with a much lower-level partner the interaction tended to be asymmetric[7].

While Davis' study focussed on adults, this finding should also be borne in mind when dealing with children, since it is known that these are known to often rely on adults to manage conversations for them (Scarcella & Higa, 1981).

[7] Asymmetry, In Davis' words implied 'an unequal distribution of speaking effort, with one speaker initiating and developing most topics, or asking questions (as in an interview), and the other speaker taking a more passive or reactive role' (Davis, 2009).

An additional difference related to the proficiency of the interlocutors is the contrasting level of participation of the two members when their command of the language is very disparate. Pica et al. (1987) examined the impact of interaction on comprehension eliciting data from native speakers interacting with non-native (NN) speakers (therefore, proficient-non-proficient). She found that the NN member participated less than the native one. However, she interpreted this as beneficial for the least proficient member who would benefit from the abundant comprehensible input and the opportunity to participate at his or her own level.

On the other hand, Yule and Macdonald (1990) studied the interactions of mixed- proficiency dyads of university students. They had to resolve a task that required one learner to give map directions to their interlocutor who had a slightly different map. These authors found little negotiation when the high-proficiency learner was giving the map directions. On the contrary, and pertinent to the task layout in the present study, negotiation was abundant when the lower proficiency partner held the dominant role and, therefore, was the provider of information, rather than being the recipient. These findings highlight the difficulty of establishing crystal-clear correspondences between proficiency levels and amount and type of negotiation. Philp, Adams, and Iwashita (2013) point out that these results illustrate the complexity of factors involved in interactional exchanges.

All in all, it can be noted that research on the interlocutor and proficiency variables has so far produced interesting results, yet these, in turn, appear to be linked to additional facts playing a role, such as task type, acquaintanceship, status and, as has been seen, degree of the proficiency gap between speakers, among many others. The present thesis will contribute in this respect by providing results on the interactions of two populations of different age but same language level interacting with same-level peers and with an expert adult speaker of the TL.

Summary

In this first section we have described the main concepts forming the basis of the Interaction Approach. We have summarized some of the most important findings regarding interaction-based research and have presented descriptions and examples of the strategies used to categorize it, including a specific subsection covering peripheral aspects of relevance to the present work. Finally, we have surveyed some of the main studies exploring different populations and the interlocutor factor, specifically proficiency level and age.

In the next section we will delve into the second major area of interest of this thesis, namely the assessment of oral proficiency, and will examine some of the most significant research to this field within the context of this study.

1.2 ASSESSMENT OF ORAL PROFICIENCY

The current section will address the theoretical tenets in the second part of this thesis. Firstly we will provide a succinct introduction to the subject. This will be followed by three sub-sections, the first of which will present research findings on different age populations, i.e., children and adults (1.2.1.), while the second will focus on the two main formats[8] deployed in the assessment of oral proficiency today (1.2.2.). A third part will be specifically devoted to the analyses of existing tasks in A1 oral tests at the present time, including a detailed justification for the design of the tasks in the present study (1.2.3.).

Introduction

As Glenn Fulcher points out, the *viva voce* (oral) examination has always been used in content-based educational assessment (Latham 1877: 132), yet the assessment of Second Language (hereinafter SL) speaking in performance tests is relatively recent (Fulcher, 2015).

The assessment of oral proficiency has rightly been labelled as "an extremely difficult skill to test, as it is far too complex a skill to permit any reliable analysis to be made for the purpose of objective testing" (Heaton,

[8] Given the interaction-based approach of this dissertation, computer-based assessment was deemed out of the scope of the present study.

1988, p. 146). In contrast with the testing of other linguistic skills, the nature itself of the assessment of Foreign / Second Languages (henceforth FL)/SL speaking seems to present significant challenges having to do with its reliability, validity, being live and requiring the presence of an examiner, as well as cost and time-efficiency considerations (Foot, 1999).

Different authors have made reference to a myriad of formats used in the assessment of FL/SL speaking, with tasks including monologues talking about a topic, reading aloud through picture description, as well as Oral Proficiency Interviews (hereinafter OPIs), often called face-to face interaction (Birjandi P., 2010; Galaczi & Khabbazbashi, 2016, to name but a few). Ducasse and Brown (YEAR) state that OPIs have traditionally been the most accepted method for the assessment of FL/SL oral testing, through the Cambridge English Exams in the first half of the 20th century (see Fulcher 2015 and Vidakovic, I. & E. D. Galaczi, 2013 , for a timeline), and subsequently through the highly influential FSI/ACTFL interviews (see Brown, 2005 and Fulcher, 2003 for a history of oral interview testing).

In a previous study, Anne Lazaraton already agreed that OPIs have a fairly long history to them and added, "while objections have been (and continue to be) staged regarding numerous aspects of the OPI, there seems to be widespread agreement that it is the most appropriate tool for measuring oral proficiency" (Anne Lazaraton, 1992, p. 373).

In fact, there seems to be little doubt as for the widespread use of OPIs today as a means to assess SL speaking, given the fact that they are adopted "by academic institutions, government agencies, and private corporations for many purposes: academic placement, student assessment, program evaluation, professional certification, hiring, and promotional qualification"(Swender, 2003, p. 520).

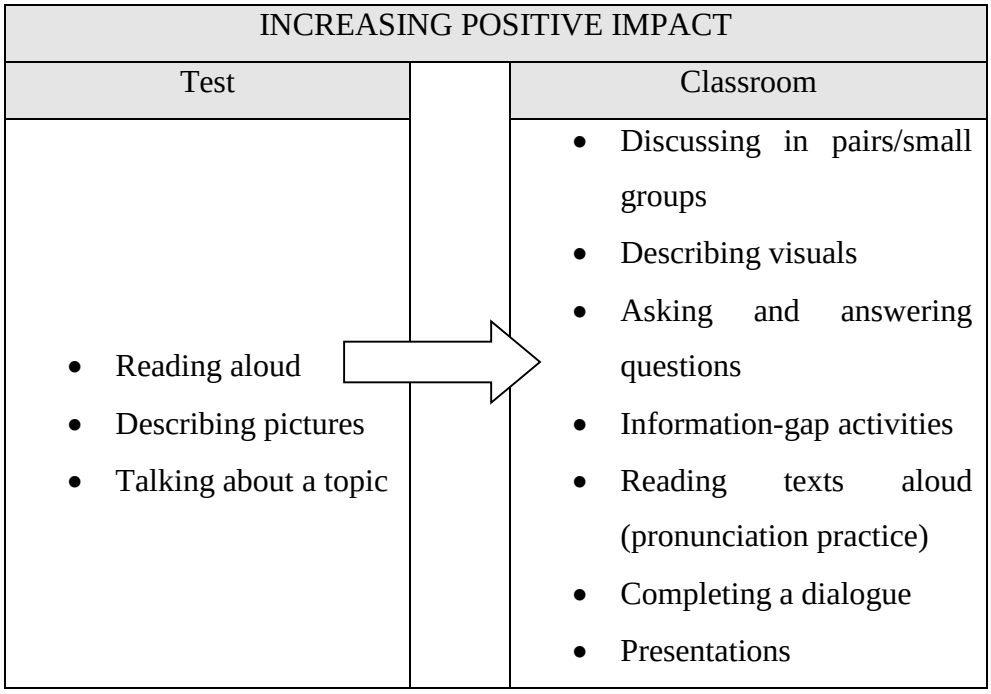
Yet still, despite the success of its implementation, the use of interaction-based testing in the assessment of oral proficiency- whether such interaction involves a test-taker and a tester, or pairs of test-takers- seems to be unpredictable by nature, and assessing the resulting performance by definition complex, for "each co-participant contributes to the interaction and performances are inextricably linked (Luoma, 2009; McNamara, 1997; Weir, 2005) and therefore, variable." (in L. Brooks, 2009, pp. 341, 342).

The type of assessment used in oral proficiency tests seems to have an impact on teaching practice. Heaton rightly points at a general belief that "oral tests can have an excellent washback effect on the teaching that takes place prior to the tests"(Heaton, 1988, p. 89). Yoffee concurs when stating that "...the washback effect [of oral tests] on classroom teaching has been positive as the practitioners place more emphasis on speaking, encouraging student oral production in class"(Yoffee, 1997, p. 10).

More specifically, Galaczi and Khabbazbashi relate the types of tasks designed in assessment as a means to implement targeting teaching practices

when talking about 'increasing positive impact', and so establish possible links between the following elements (Figure 2):

Figure 2. Test tasks and classroom-related activities



Galaczi and Khabbazbashi, Cambridge English Language Assessment 2016.

Thus, it can be derived that different approaches to oral testing at a global scale, i.e, their implementation by institutions and governments, and/ or their inclusion in educational policies, might have significant implications in the linguistic outcomes of their examinees. Some Departments of Education are not oblivious to this phenomenon and make their oral assessment tests public (see 'Evaluación de la Competencia Lingüística en Inglés: Comunicación Oral , in the bibliography section).

Likewise, and, although more specific research in the field is still needed, different assessment methods appear to yield different results in certain aspects of FL proficiency growth (Steven J. Ross, 2005).

1.2.1. Children vs adults

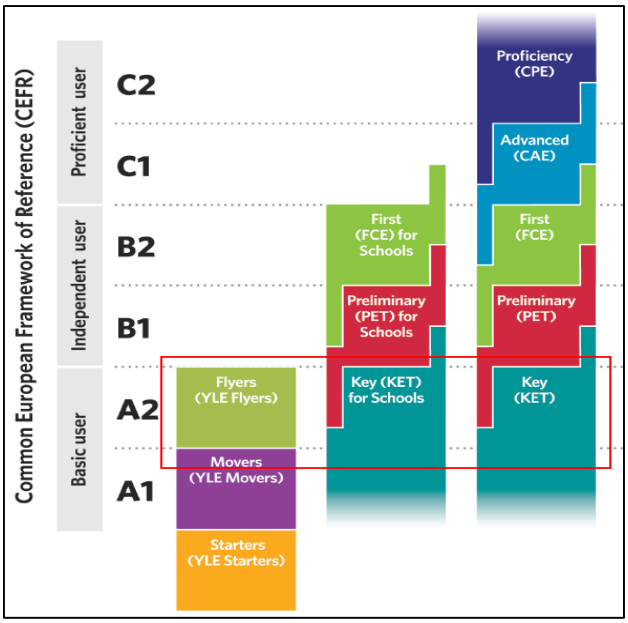
SL attainment success levels differ significantly among learners (Segalowitz, 1997, p. 85). Individual differences accounting for it have long been a subject of debate in the field of research.

This section attempts to provide relevant information and insights regarding the way age-related differences permeate EFL oral proficiency testing formats today. Since the mid and upper parts of the CEFR are beyond the scope of the present study, and the overlap of the two populations and vying testing formats takes place at the lower levels, these will constitute the focal point of this part.

CEFR oral testing examinations specifically aimed at children include ranges pre A1 up to A2. Even though they will be dissected in more detail in the section *2.3.iii. Tasks in oral proficiency tests*, they include Cambridge's as well as Pearson's Young Learners (YL) examinations. Trinity's GESE grade 1 and 2, on the other hand, are designed to be carried out indistinctly with children (age 5 onwards), or adults. While there is a predominance of

individual OPI as the form of assessment at the lower levels of the CEFR[9], it is noticeable how Cambridge offers two different examination formats at level A2: YL (Flyers), which is an individual OPI, and Cambridge English Key (KET, and KET for schools), a layout including individual plus paired OPI. Their mapping to the CEFR can be noted on the graph below:

Figure 3. Cambridge examinations and mapping to the CEFR



While these two tests overlap within the same A2 level of the CEFR, differences between their formats might hint at age-related considerations. Cambridge's YL are aimed at "students in primary or lower secondary school"[10], whereas KET for schools targets "students in late primary or

9 With the exception of Pearson's PTE-YL, whose format resembles an individual OPI with the caveat of being implemented with several test-takers at the same, to be analysed in the section above mentioned.

10 Information borrowed from *https://support.cambridgeenglish.org/hc/en-gb/articles/202838466-Who-can-take-Cambridge-English-Exams-*

secondary school". Non-specific KET could, however, be taken by adults at any age.

In point of fact, at level A2, Cambridge is somehow acknowledging the degree of age-derived implications in the way it adapts its testing, namely via i) the exam structural format or, less significantly, through ii) modifications to the content of the tasks. The former, however, is used to cater for differences within a relatively small age bracket, i.e., 'primary/lower secondary' (individual OPI) or 'late primary/secondary' (individual and paired OPI). The latter, i.e., simply modifying the content of the tasks at hand, on the other hand, is resorted to in order to address more apparent age-differences, e.g., test-takers sitting non-specific KET (who could be any age) and KET for Schools (who could be as young as late primary, i.e., 11-year-old children). A close look at the model samples offered at

- http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams/key/

  and

- http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams/key-for-schools/,

respectively, will allow us to find the same 'Task 2' format -the interactive OPI- including topics such as 'museums' and 'books-bookshops' (non-specific KET), and 'skateboarding competition' and 'theatre school' (KET for Schools) (see Appendix A).

Since no published rationale accounting for the different formatting is known to us, one logical explanation for such different layouts could be the

fact that children are believed to frequently rely on adults in order to manage conversations for them (Scarcella & Higa, 1981), a fact that will be mentioned again later in this thesis. A further difference could be related to the notion that very uneven dyads- i.e., learners paired with much lower-level partners - lead to asymmetric interactions (Davis, 2009). The likelihood of the latter is, nevertheless, lower, given the already relatively low proficiency of 'basic' (the term with which CEFR designates A1 and A2 learners) speakers at this level.

As we will see below, while there seems to be general consensus on the view of paired (peer-peer) OPIs leading to wider spectra of language, this might not apply to all levels of the CEFR. Galaczi's findings (2004) regarding Cambridge's First Certificate (FCE) -level B2 (aimed at students at secondary school and above)- revealed how "discourse on paired tasks at the lower proficiency level was not connected because the speakers failed to work with each other, whereas higher proficiency learners' develop[ed] the ability to work with their interlocutor [and] shift more successfully between the role of listener and speaker' (Galaczi, 2004, p. 264 in Ducasse & Brown, 2009: 426).

Similarly, a study with high school and university students by Lindsay Brooks pointed out how paired testing may 'more closely mirror the type of oral interaction the students would likely encounter at university and it reflects the type of speaking tasks commonly used in the classroom'(L. Brooks, 2009, also in Taylor, 2000); however, and, in the same line of thought

as research regarding interaction in the above section, we would like to raise awareness on the importance of speaking tests reflecting – and having an impact on – the type of interaction found in EFL children classes today.

Bar KET and the *That's English!* programme[11], which combine individual and paired OPIs at A2, lower level (pre-A1 – A2) testing tends to eschew the paired format in favour of individual OPIs. In addition to the factors mentioned above regarding the YL-Flyers / KET distinction, some other reasons for this might include controlling the direction of the interaction, 'scaffolding' the conversation, as well as logistic and time-control issues, to name but a few.

One consideration regarding the assessment of oral proficiency – and language proficiency, for that matter- of particular relevance to this section is the distinction between language development and language proficiency, something which the CEFR fails to do according to Hulstijn (2011). In his study, he claims that that CEFR does not 'sufficiently keep development apart from proficiency, and that its vertical dimension represents levels of intellectual skills'. His language proficiency construct focusses on adults and attempts to account for the fact that 'L2 learners with higher intellectual, educational, occupational, or leisure-time profiles may perform, at a given point in time, both better (i.e., in the domain of Higher Language Cognition,

[11] PTE-YL includes five test-takers and a single examiner, yet its format should not be mistaken for a paired or 5-way OPI, as will be seen in *2.3.iii Tasks in oral proficiency tests,* given the type of interaction and discourse generated.

HLC) and more poorly (i.e., in the domain of Basic Language Cognition, BLC) than native speakers with lower (intellectual) profiles.' He refers to BLC as what all native speakers have in common, while HLC holds the domain where differences between native speakers can be observed.

However, as for the lower levels of the CEFR, as is the case with the participants in this thesis (A1), we might be facing another type of language development influence, i.e., not one so closely related to Hulstijn's BLC - HLC distinction (2011), but one having to do with cognitive developmental stages. In other words, children and adults might provide completely different – yet equally valid- pictures on what performance to expect at level A1 of the CEFR.

As a whole we may infer that the analysis of the different types of oral assessment formats aimed at children or adults across the CEFR (for a closer examination refer to section 1.2.3.) shows how they are admittedly revealing the underlying belief that children cannot successfully perform certain oral tasks.

Despite the fact that countless studies have addressed the subject of SL acquisition with children and adults (e.g., Bialystok & Hakuta, 1999; Harley, 1986; J. S. Johnson & Newport, 1989; S.D. Krashen, 1982, to name but a very few), the way the oral proficiency of these two populations is -and could be- assessed in official examinations, as well as the underlying reasons

for the current *status quo*, are unexplored areas which this study attempts to shed light on.

1.2.2. Individual vs paired

Since the outset of modern oral proficiency testing, Oral Proficiency Interviews (hereinafter OPIs) in their different modalities have traditionally been the default method for the assessment of FL or SL ability, initially via the Cambridge English exams in the first half of the twentieth century, and subsequently through the prominent FSI (Foreign Service Institute) /ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) interviews (see Brown, 2005 and Fulcher, 2003, for a full chronology on oral interview testing).

Individual OPIs are characterized by an interviewer or examiner engaging in an interview or conversation with an examinee, while the 'paired' or 'interactive' format relies on two or more examinees interacting with each other in the presence of one or various examiners.

Ducasse and Brown explain how research in SLA in the last decades of the 20th century (Gass & Varonis, 1985a.; M.H. Long, 1983b) was critical in the "shift from the view that speaking in a second language (L2) generally meant information transfer to an acknowledgement that speaking involved negotiating meaning".

Such findings had an impact in testing: "although the individual mode never left the stage, along with emphasis on pair work in language learning contexts came a growing interest in paired language assessments, particularly in the context of oral proficiency interviewing (Taylor & Wigglesworth, 2009).

Van Lier states that the move towards paired OPIs was triggered by the 'realization that interview tests resulted in 'test discourse' or 'institutional talk', and did not represent normal conversation (Van Lier, 1989, in Ducasse & Brown, 2009, p. 424). Kasper & Ross concur: 'while the observation that 'questions' and 'answers' can and do occur in ordinary conversation is obviously correct, it does not follow that, therefore, ordinary conversation and interviews are fundamentally 'the same'' (Kasper & Ross, 2007, p. 2047)

Individual OPIs have gradually given way to the paired format as the norm in the assessment of spoken English internationally. Paired OPIs are increasingly becoming a key element – if not the only one- resorted to in the assessment of oral proficiency - employed in most international tests, including Cambridge ESOL examinations. This seems to apply particularly to course-based (e.g., Ducasse, 2010; May, 2009) and general proficiency contexts, since tests of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) still base their format in single-candidate assessment, via face-to-face testing with an examiner or in through a semi-direct format (A. M. Ducasse & A. Brown, 2011), although some research has begun to provide evidence of its benefits in this context as well (L. Brooks, 2009). Semi-direct testing is characterised

by tests that elicit active speech by the examinee through means such as tape recordings, printed test booklets, or elicitation techniques other than direct, face-to-face interviews (Larson, 1984). It is worth mentioning at this point that EAP is beyond the scope of the present study.

As mentioned above, one of the most prominent exemplars championing the use of OPIs today might be the OPI of the ACTFL (preceded by the FSI and ILR - Interagency Language Roundtable) - although highly criticized - since 1982. From a logistic and time-efficient perspective, the canonical question- answer sequence typical in individual OPIs seems to be "the most expedient exchange structure because it enables the interviewer to elicit ratable speech samples on the topics mandated by the interview schedule in a timely fashion" (Kasper & Ross, 2007, p. 2048). However, there are differences of opinion amongst scholars, since Ducasse and Brown (2009) also point out how peer-to-peer assessment is typically also more cost and time efficient, as "candidates are tested together, and raters assess two or more candidates simultaneously." (Ducasse & Brown, 2009, p. 424).

Original criticism to the ACTFL mentioned the fact that none of the scales used in such test were not backed by any sort of "empirical underpinning" (Lantolf & Frawley, 1985; Pienemann, Johnston, & Brindley, 1988, in Fulcher, 1996).Yet, perhaps more relevant to the present study is, as Yoffee (1997) explains, the highly-structured nature of individual OPIs, which makes them essentially different from the paired format (Yoffee, 1997).

A series of studies in the 90s (Csepes, 2002; M. Johnson, 2001; Anne Lazaraton, 1992; Perrett, 1990; Young & Milanovic, 1992) backed up the notion that individual OPIs promoted a power differential in which the interviewee had little to no possibility of introducing topics or controlling the direction of the interaction. Birjandi (2010) pinpointed this 'asymmetry' of the individual format due to the exertion of power over the interviewee regarding "question formation, discourse trajectory, choice of content, and 'moves' distribution across the interviewer and the interviewee" (Birjandi P., 2010, p. 171).

McNamara & Roever (2006) concur and state that interactions in individual OPIs are shaped by a social and cultural 'interaction order', not necessarily a linguistic one, whereby the status superiority of the interviewer has a determining influence on test-takers' performance.

Együd and Glover (2001) mention how, in individual OPIs, initiation is exclusive to the interviewer and, unlike the paired format, it is limited to the interlocutor-interviewer interaction pattern. In fact, one of the major flaws attributed to the individual OPI formal lies in the inadequacy to provide test-takers with the chance to participate in the interaction other than as mere interviewees, i.e., responding to questions. In this respect, the original notion of 'interactional competence', that is, how speakers structure and sequence their speech, apply turn-taking rules and how they support and collaborate with their conversational partners (He & Young, 1998; Kramsch, 1986) does not seem to hold much weight in this type of testing. Kramsch successfully

expounded how communication is co-constructed by the interactional partners; in the same line of thought, Galaczi pointed out that "responsibility for talk cannot be assigned to a single individual" (Galaczi, 2013, p. 1).

Pica analysed how the "reflection of the unequal participant relationships which shape and are shaped by classroom activities" led to a "relative absence in classroom discourse of the interactional adjustments (mentioned in the 'interaction' section), which, however, seem to play a key role in SLA-FLA" (Pica, 1987, p. 3).

In line with Pica's findings, Lantolf & Frawley (1988) asserted that the washback effect derived from individual OPIs may nourish asymmetrical power distribution and imposition in the classroom, with teachers acting as the main initiators and students mostly only responding and receiving feedback on their responses. It seems obvious that such washback effect would clash with more communicative language teaching approaches promoting peer-peer interaction, influential in past recent decades. In this respect, as Larsen-Freeman (1986) states, the very term 'communicative' carries an obvious ring of truth: we "learn to communicate by communicating" (Larsen-Freeman, 1986, p. 131).

Taking into account the development of interaction theory synthesized in the first section, the aptness of traditional single-candidate tests to provide interviewees with the opportunity to show their ability to participate in interaction by merely responding to questions seems at least questionable.

Rarely will individual OPIs provide examinees with chances to interrupt and hold the floor or to demonstrate their knowledge of how to open and close a conversation, let alone make ample use of negotiation strategies. As a matter of fact, several studies have shown a greater percentage of conversational management functions, such as topic building, in paired OPIs (e.g.,Galaczi, 2004; Taylor, 2001).

In addition to the above, Birjandi (2010) refers to a further limitation to individual OPIs: their being pseudo-contingent, i.e. creating false contexts (e.g. role-plays). He supports the notion that, even though this may also happen with the paired format, the asymmetrical nature of the individual format exacerbates the issue.

The success of paired OPIs has also been the subject of research (Hilsdon, 1991; Reves, 1982; Shohamy, Reves, & Bejarano, 1986). Some scholars seem categorical in their view that paired OPIs yield better English than do individual ones. Skehan (2001) stated that paired test tasks "enable a wider range of language functions and roles to be engineered to provide a better basis for oral language sampling with less asymmetry between participants" (Skehan, 2001, p. 169). For many, the single examiner format is thought to be more of an interrogation in which inequality of participants is more preeminent, thus leading to a limited range of speech acts and artificiality (Együd & Glover, 2001).

One of the most robust claims discarding individual OPI in favour of the paired format is the notion that they "allow for the assessment of a broader range of skills than do the more traditional interviewer tests, in particular that they are more balanced (Együd & Glover, 2001) and interactive (Ffrench, 1999), with candidates producing a greater range of functions (Kormos, 1999; A. Lazaraton, 2002) and interactional patterns being more varied (Saville & Hargreaves, 1999)" (A. M. Ducasse & A. Brown, 2011, p. abstract).

Similarly, a study with adults carried out by Brooks showed that, when test- takers interacted with other students in the paired test, their production was "much more complex and revealed the co-construction of a more linguistically demanding performance than did the interaction between examiners and students. The paired testing format resulted in more interaction, negotiation of meaning, consideration of the interlocutor and more complex output" (L. Brooks, 2009, p. 341).

Again, it is worth noting at this point that all this research seemed to focus on adults in the upper half of the CEFR (with the exception of Ducasse (2008), who focussed on beginner adults learning Spanish as an L2), i.e., mostly B2, C1 and C2, leaving aside children or adults beginning to learn the target language. What is more, even within those levels, the benefits of the peer-peer interaction sometimes took place among the most competent speakers, as Galaczi showed: "discourse on paired tasks at the lower proficiency level was not connected" (Galaczi, 2004, p. 264). Consequently, assumptions on the validity of this construct with this population lack

empirical evidence, and constitute one of the main motivations for the present study.

Additional reasons supporting the spread use of paired OPIs include pragmatic considerations (Berkoff, 1985; Berry, 1997a; Folland & Robertson, 1976; Hilsdon, 1991; Reves, 1982), as well as the possibility of implementing a wider range of tasks (Shohamy et al., 1986; Taylor, 2001). The positive washback derived from paired testing reflecting usual classroom activities has also been analysed in research (Berry, 1997a; Bonk & Ockey, 2003; Hilsdon, 1991; Taylor, 2000). A further asset of the paired format over individual forms of OPI regarding its validity was the finding that, if the former included two examiners present, individual examiner bias was compromised, and marker reliability enhanced (Foot, 1999).

From a test-taker point of view, paired OPIs also seem to boast a positive reception, i.e., there is evidence suggesting the claim that students like the paired format (Együd & Glover, 2001; Fulcher, 1996b); Birjandi puts it down to being psychologically less demanding, for "the information gap induced (in this type of testing) resembles that in real-life conversations" (Heaton, 1988; Wallis, 1995, in Birjandi, 2010 p. 172), and may ultimately result in lower levels of anxiety.

Still, while a significant amount of research backs up paired OPIs over individual ones, several studies have strived to raise awareness as to some of its limitations. Work by Kasper & Ross (2007) noted how the natural

unpredictability of paired OPIs might allow a test-taker to carry out sudden shifts in topics which could result in understanding issues on their interlocutor's part; what is more, such issues might not be "related to linguistic problems or difficulties with the subject matter" (Kasper & Ross, 2007, p. 2062).

Likewise, and, although not germane to the present study, it seems that, while the strongest argument supporting the validity of paired OPIs lies in the claim that such tasks allow for the assessment of a wider spectrum of interactional skills if compared with individual OPIs, "there is surprisingly little research into the judgments that are made of such performances" (Ducasse & Brown, 2009, p. abstract).

Among the different studies comparing individual and paired OPIs, a paper by Birjandi (2010) analyses both formats, and brings into light some of the unsolved issues affecting the paired format "which have unquestionably passed the scrutiny of the oral proficiency assessment scholars" (Birjandi P., 2010, p. 170). In this respect he intends to raise awareness on a series of unanswered issues having to do with the level of proficiency or interlocutors, personality traits, level of acquaintance, to name but a few.

Given the lack of empirical data regarding the adequacy of the paired versus individual OPIs with children and adults at the lower levels of the CEFR, it could be equally argued that the 'interaction order' which might

appear as a constraint at the higher levels of the CEFR may, conversely, aid and scaffold the production of beginners or low proficient learners, as it may result in a kind of 'guided speech' –in terms of discourse trajectory and choice of content (Van Lier, 1989: 449) without which students – particularly children- might struggle to co-construct meaning with similar-level peers successfully. This could be further highlighted by some of the cognitive and linguistic constraints alluded to in the 'interaction' section such as the fact that learners paired with much lower-level partners (as is the individual OPI in the present thesis) tended to trigger asymmetric interactions (Davis, 2009), as well as the notion that children are known to frequently rely on adults in order to manage conversations for them (Scarcella & Higa, 1981 on L1 acquisition).

One of the possible trade-offs to this dichotomy is the implementation of the so-called 'mixed individual – paired format', which comprises individual OPI (e.g., carrying out a monologue before an examiner) and a paired OPI within the same examination. This is commonplace -levels A2 and above- in both Cambridge ESOL and Official Schools of Languages right across Spain, with the added advantages of including two examiners present (Foot, 1999). That notwithstanding, it is worth reminding that, to some degree, either format is marked by peer-peer interaction rather than or as well as examiner-examinee interaction (Taylor & Wigglesworth, 2009).

Finally, it can be said that, in general terms, paired OPI seems to offer a great deal of advantages that may outweigh any possible drawbacks when

compared to the examiner-examinee interviewees. The paired format is widely and successfully used among adult learners at B and C levels of the CEFRL by world-renowned institutions. However, it has not been extended to examine low levels (A levels), and, consequently, child populations. Again, decisions made by the examiners and stakeholders seem to be based on the underlying belief that children or low level learners will not be able to successfully interact with level-matched peers. By contrast, research on interaction seems to prove that children are able to interact and negotiate unless their level is extremely low. This mismatch constitutes a significant part of the rationale for the present study.

1.2.3. Tasks in oral proficiency tests

Tasks in oral proficiency tests should be shaped by the construct they attempt to assess, and not the other way about, since we would otherwise "run the risk of *circularity* by saying that the definition of speaking ability in a SL is simply whatever is measured by the task itself" (He & Young, 1998, p. 2). This, however, demands an understanding of what speaking ability in a SL/FL is, and of what it means for someone to speak a language *better* or *worse* than someone else[12], irrespective of the testing instrument devised to assess it.

[12] Read (Hulstijn, 2011) for further information on Language proficiency in native and nonnative speakers.

In this respect we would like to mention Taylor and Wigglesworth's (2009) insight:

> 'Whether the interaction involves a test taker and test examiner / rater in the traditional individual format, or a pair or group of test takers, the co-constructed nature of the interaction, and the fact that co-participants' contributions are inextricably linked, raises issues for language testers relating to construct definition, reliability and fairness'
>
> (Taylor & Wigglesworth, 2009, p. 328)

By stating that a given task constitutes a good SL/FL speaking test, we are making an assertion about the construct validity of the test, namely, that such task measures speaking ability rather than other skills, e.g., reading or writing. In He & Young's (1998) terms, construct validity is "the *quality* of a test that allows us to make interpretations of the scores on the test'. For them, test scores ought not to be used as the basis defining the construct of speaking ability, since "they do not help us think about what is the best way to design a test" (He & Young, 1998, p. 2).

In their attempts to design efficient instruments to assess learners' EFL oral proficiency, institutions worldwide have taken on different tasks to induce students to produce reliable speech samples. Therefore, it is interesting to start by providing an overview on this vast array of options. We have

summarized the main examiners worldwide as well as the main Spanish institutions, for geographical relevance, in charge of official examinations.

Subsequently, we will more specifically focus on the A1 (CEFR Basic User) level, the target group in the present study. At this level, we include an analysis of some real official samples, which the examining institutions themselves have published. At all times, a critical analysis of the tests will be offered.

A broad categorization of the main oral examinations according to their correspondence to the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (hereinafter CEFR) can be seen in the graph below (Table 1). Note the format used in brackets:

- Individual OPI
- Paired or 3-way OPI
- Multiple: more than 3 students taking part at the same time
- Fully individual computer-based

Table 1. Main oral examinations and mapping to the CEFR

PRE-A1	A1	A1-A2	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Cambridge YLE (Starters) *(Ind. OPI)*	**Cambridge YLE (Movers)** *(Ind. OPI)*		**Cambridge YLE (Flyers)** *(Ind. OPI)* **Cambridge English Key (KET)** *(Ind.+Paired/3 OPI)*	**Cambridge English Preliminary (PET)** *(Ind.+Paired /3 OPI)*	**Cambridge English First (FCE)** *(Ind.+Paired /3 OPI)*	**Cambridge English Advanced (CAE)** *(Ind.+Paired /3 OPI)*	**Cambridge English Proficiency (CPE)** *(Ind.+Paired/ 3 OPI)*
			Bulats 20-39 *(FICP)*	**Bulats 40-59** *(FICP)*	**Bulats 60-74** *(FICP)*	**Bulats 75-89** *(FICP)*	**Bulats 90+** *(FICP)*
Trinity GESE Grade 1 *(Ind. OPI)*	**Trinity GESE Grade 2** *(Ind. OPI)*		**Trinity ISE Foundation** (Ind. OPI) **Trinity GESE Grades 3-4** (Ind. OPI)	**Trinity ISE I** (Ind. OPI) **Trinity GESE Grades 5-6** (Ind. OPI)	**Trinity ISE II** *(Ind. OPI)* **Trinity GESE Grades 7-8-9** (Ind. OPI)	**Trinity ISE III** *(Ind. OPI)* **Trinity GESE Grades 10-11** (Ind. OPI)	**Trinity ISE IV** *(Ind. OPI)* **Trinity GESE Grade 10-12** *(Ind. OPI)*
PTE YLE (First words) *(5 candidates)*	**PTE YLE (Spring board)** *(5 candidates)*	**PTE YLE (Quick march)** *(5 candidates)*	**PTE YLE (Breakthrough)** *(5 candidates)* **PTE General Level 1** *(Ind. OPI)* **PTE Academic 30-42** *(FICP)*	**PTE General Level 2** *(Ind. OPI)* **PTE Academic 43-58** *(FICP)*	**PTE General Level 3** *(Ind. OPI)* **PTE Academic 59-75** *(FICP)*	**PTE General Level 4** *(Ind. OPI)* **PTE Academic 76-84** *(FICP)*	**PTE General Level 5** *(Ind. OPI)* **PTE Academic 85+** *(FICP)*
		That's English! *(Ind. OPI)*	**That's English!** *(Ind.+Paired/3 OPI)*	**That's English!** *(Ind.+Paired /3 OPI)* **School of Languages (B1)** *(Ind.+Paired /3 OPI)*	**That's English!** *(Ind.+Paired /3 OPI)* **School of Languages (B2)** *(Ind.+Paired /3 OPI)*	**School of Languages (C1)** *(Ind.+Paired /3 OPI)*	**School of Languages (C2)*** *(Ind.+Paired/ 3 OPI)*
				BEC Preliminary *(Ind.+Paired /3 OPI)*	**BEC Vantage** *(Ind.+Paired /3 OPI)*	**BEC Higher** *(Ind.+Paired /3 OPI)*	
				IELTS 4-4.5 *(Ind. OPI)*	**IELTS 5-6.5** *(Ind. OPI)*	**IELTS 7-8** *(Ind. OPI)*	**IELTS 8.5-9** *(Ind. OPI)*
				TOEFL iBT 57-86 *(FICP)*	**TOEIC (speaking) 160** *(FICP)* **TOEFL iBT 87-109** *(FICP)*	**TOEIC (speaking) 180** *(FICP)* **TOEFL iBT 110-120** *(FICP)*	
	TOEIC (speaking) 50 *(FICP)*		**TOEIC (speaking) 90** *(FICP)*	**TOEIC (speaking) 120** *(FICP)*			
					Michigan ECCE *(Ind. OPI)*		**Michigan ECPE** *(Paired or 3-way OPI)*

Acronyms in the graph:

FICP: Fully individual, computer based.
Ind.+Paired/3 OPI: Individual OPI plus paired or 3-way OPI.
**Not available in most Schools of Languages in Spain (2017).*

In addition to the above is the ACTFL (not added due to the fact that the one-directional alignment to the CEFR subcategorises levels and skills, to be found at https://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/reports/Assigning_CEFR_Ratings_To_ACTFL_Assessments.pdf) , in individual OPI consisting of a '20-30 minute telephone conversation between a certified ACTFL tester and the candidate, (…) measuring language production holistically by determining patterns of strengths and weaknesses.'

In general terms, it seems the modus operandi of English tests (adults) for specific purposes (academic, business) tends to be fully individual (no interaction between two persons) computer based (Bulats, Toeic, PTE Academic), with the exception of Cambridge's BEC, which is based on a mixed individual plus paired (or 3-way) OPI, something which supports Ducasse & Brown's findings (A. Ducasse & A. Brown, 2011).

General proficiency tests include more variation. While TOEFL follows a fully individual computer-based format, IELTS, as well as both Trinity GESE and ISE follow an individual OPI scheme at all levels. Cambridge and Official Schools of Languages in Spain include both individual and paired (or 3-way) OPIs. Lastly, Cambridge Michigan's ECCE

(B2) and ECPE (C2) follow an individual and paired (or 3-way) format, respectively.

If we look at the mapping of tests to the CEFR at the lower levels we find find the first instance of a real paired (or three way) on Cambridge's KET or *That's English!*'s A2 examinations. While Pearson's YL holds a simultaneous multiple-test-taker format, it cannot be considered a *de facto* interactive type of testing, since, as will be noted below, this format appears to trigger a highly-structured type of discourse and seems to be interfered by other skills (reading) as prompts for oral production.

In order to assess additional task typologies, the following already existing – and successfully implemented - models were analysed: A1 speaking tests from Cambridge University (Young Learners 'Movers'), Trinity College London Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE) Grade 2 and Pearson Test of English (PTE) Young Learners (Springboard).

Cambridge's Young Learners (Starters, Movers, Flyers) and Pearson's Young Learners (Firstwords, Springboard, Quickmarch, Breakthrough) are specific testing aimed at children. As from December 2013, candidates taking Trinity's examinations 'between the ages 4 and 5 years old (before entry closing date) are permitted to take GESE Grade 1 only. Unless the candidate reaches 5 years of age on the day of the exam, he/she may take Grade 2 or above.'

Since A1 is the level we have carried our study at, we will now more specifically dissect the following A1 oral testing options:

Figure 4. A1 Oral tests relevant to the study

EXAM	FORMAT
CAMBRIDGE YLE (MOVERS)	Individual OPI
TRINITY GESE (GRADE 2)	Individual OPI
PTE YLE (SPRINGBOARD)	Multiple: examiner plus 5 test-takers

These tests should be able to provide effective language samples for the assessment of the communicative skills and language at level A1 of the CEFR, including:

- **Language functions**
    - Indicating the position of people and objects
    - Describing people, animals, objects and places very simply
    - Stating simple facts
    - Informing about possessions
    - Asking very simple questions about personal details

- **Grammar**

  The candidate is expected to demonstrate the ability to understand:

    - Present simple tense questions
    - Question words who? when?
    - Present continuous tense questions
    - Determiners some, any

  The candidate is expected to demonstrate the ability to understand and use:

    - Present simple tense
    - There is/are and *has/have got/have you got? Do you have?*
    - Question words *where? how?*
    - Prepositions of place *in, on, under, between, next to*

- Determiners *their, its*
- Possessive pronouns *mine, yours, his, hers*
- Yes/no answers to present continuous tense questions

- **Lexis**

  The candidate is expected to demonstrate the ability to understand and use vocabulary related to:

  - Rooms in the house
  - Household objects
  - Family and friends
  - Pets
  - Possessions
  - Days of the week and months of the year
  - Cardinal numbers up to 50
  - Words and phrases relating to the language functions listed above

- **Phonology**

  - The correct pronunciation of words relevant to the lexical areas listed above
  - Basic intonation patterns for simple questions
  - Contractions, eg *I've, I'm, he's*

(Borrowed from the GESE Exam Information booklet - 8th impression)

Cambridge University (YL 'Movers')

Cambridge University (YL 'Movers') consists of an individual OPI including interaction between a single examiner and one student. Its main characteristics are summarised below:

	TASK TYPE	NUMBER OF ITEMS	DURATION	SCORE/MARKING
	Find the differences	2 pictures	5-7 minutes	Students are rated on three aspects: 1) interactive listening ability; 2) pronunciation; 3) production of words and phrases. Each criterion carries a maximum mark of 3. (UCLES 2003a)
	Picture story	4 pictures (student narrates 3)		
	Odd-one-out	4		
	Answer questions about you	Unspecified		
TOTAL	4 tasks	-		

Cambridge's Mover's makes use of an individual OPI question-answer scheme. It boasts a highly-efficient multiple-question format in which to, as Kasper & Ross (2007) explain, answers deemed as not relevant, inadequate or insufficient by the interviewer lead them to 'produce one or more subsequent versions of the question (Davidson, 1984) so that multiple questions are performed on the same topical point (e.g. Heritage & Roth, 1995) in order to enable relevant responses that provide ratable speech samples in environments where such responses may be difficult to obtain by means of the canonical question–answer adjacency pair structure' (Kasper & Ross, 2007).

Following Kasper & Ross, such multiple questions might be i) reactive, i.e. respond to candidates' signs of non-comprehension or partial comprehension, in which case they judge the test-taker's preceding action as problematic and offer them another attempt until deemed as relevant and

satisfactory or (at this level) ii) proactive, questions aimed at triggering production beyond the mere answering of questions.

Consider the following examples (17), (18) and (19):

(17) Examiner: *What other different things can you see?*
Student A: *This is a computer, and this is a phone.*
Examiner: *Good.*
Student A: *And… The… the… here… have … two, erm…*
Examiner: ***Are they pictures?*** [Reactive question]
Student A: *Two pictures, and… here… three pictures.*
Examiner: *Very good….*

(Cambridge YL Movers Speaking sample: Arthur)

(18) Examiner: *And where do you play with your friends at school?*
Student A: *School… school is…* (unint)
Examiner: ***In the playground?*** [Reactive question]
Student A: *Yes.*

(Cambridge YL Movers Speaking sample: Masa)

Note how, in the examples the above, the examinee provides evidence of not knowing how to word what s/he means (17), and perhaps not understanding what the examiner had asked (18). In both cases the answer most likely to satisfy their needs is provided in an interrogative form which is 'unlocked' by simply answering 'yes', which, in turn, adds to the building-up of the examinee's trust towards the tester.

(19) Examiner: *That's very good. (pause). Now, look at these four pictures. One is different. The book is different. A lemon, a pineapple and an orange are fruit; you eat them, you don't eat a book, you read it. Now, you tell me about these pictures: which one is different?*
Examiner: *This. (unint)*
Student A: ***Why?*** [Proactive question]
Examiner: *Bird, two bird, but is a fry (mean. 'fly'), but cow is not fry.*
Student A: *Very good.*

(Cambridge YL Movers Speaking sample: Masa)

Such format appears to yield quantifiable samples of language, and has been reported as having a significant washback effect on classrooms across the globe, as is the case in China:

> "The impact of the test (Movers) on instruction is evidenced not only by teacher training, the network of English training and testing, the national conferences and seminars on educational measurement for Cambridge Young Learners managed by UCLES and the Sino-British Center, but also by the large number of instructional materials linked to test content which "span the instructional spectrum from multi-unit formal classroom programs to cheerful puzzle books for independent study, and these materials appear to focus on language instruction rather than rehearsal of test-taking skills." '(Bailey, 2005, p. 250, in Indiana University, Language Test Critiques)

Still, from an SLA perspective, it appears as though such type of testing somehow rewards a type of language that might be measurable yet still focuses on getting 'right answers' via an individual OPI since the main exchanges of information in Cambridge Mover's test appear to be in the form of answers to i) the instructions provided by the examiner, ii) understanding and responding personal questions, or iii) answers to feedback or clarification on the examiner's part when the test-taker makes mistakes or does not manage to perform the task successfully in order to guide them through the tasks.

Trinity GESE (Grade 2)

Trinity GESE (Grade 2) consists of an individual OPI including interaction between a single examiner plus one student. Its main features are sketched below:

- Individual OPI

	TASK TYPE	NUMBER OF ITEMS	DURATION	SCORE/MARKING
	Conversation phase	Not spec.	6 min.	4 bands of task fulfilment
TOTAL	1	Not spec	6 min.	4 bands of task fulfilment

As for the minimum age allowed to sit the Trinity GESE examinations, 'with effect from December 2013, candidates between the ages 4 and 5 years old (before entry closing date) are permitted to take GESE Grade 1 only. Unless

the candidate reaches 5 years of age on the day of the exam, he/she may take Grade 2 or above.'

(Source: http://www.trinitycollege.com/site/?id=2391)

Regarding Trinity GESE Grade 2, 'it is acceptable for candidates to answer the examiner's questions with a few words, very short responses or full sentences. Candidates are expected to provide simple descriptions of people and objects using basic phrases and sentences. In the exam, candidates are required to ask the examiner at least one very simple question about personal details.' The 'GESE Exam Information booklet - 8th impression' (September 2016) states that 'at each grade the candidate is expected to take more responsibility for initiating and maintaining the conversation. From Grade 2, the candidate is expected to ask the examiner questions. These questions should arise naturally out of the conversation and will be used to further the interaction.'

However, when analysing the actual samples provided on the Trinity website (http://www.trinitycollege.com/site/?id=3367), we may see how the video clips include a specific instruction: 'It is important to ask the examiner to ask a question about themselves. You can do this at any time.'

However, upon watching the GESE Grade 2 student 'Saliha' sample (the second out of three), this part of the interaction is transcribed as follows:

- Examiner: *And do you have a question to ask me?*
- Saliha: *For example?*
- Examiner: *Oo, anything.*
- Saliha: *What time did you get up early?*
- Examiner: *Today?*
- Saliha: *Yes.*
- Examiner: *Today I got up quite late, I got up at 8:30 in the morning.*

(Trinity GESE II Speaking sample: Saliha)

It is important to know that Saliha's question is completely unrelated or embedded within natural conversation. In fact, the previous activity had to to with answering some questions related to some pictures, the last one showing somebody cooking. Saliha is awarded a top 'A' pass mark on the grounds that she 'understood the examiner at most times and used a very good range of language from GESE Grade 2 correctly and answered the examiner's questions quickly.'

Consequently, it seems that the 'candidate being expected to ask questions arising naturally out of the conversation' might be limited to preparing a single (1) formulaic question, even if such question is fully unrelated to the interaction going on.

According to this information, it seems such testing might be more concerned about getting 'relevant and satisfactory' factual answers (including the use of a single prepared-from-home question) rather than about generating

meaningful, i.e., *negotiated, co-constructed,* interaction, whose role in this test is not visible.

PTE YL (Springboard)

PTE YL Springboard comprises a game-like structure including interaction between a single examiner plus up to 5 students simultaneously. A brief outline of its main features is provided below:

	TASK TYPE	NUMBER OF ITEMS	DURATION	SCORE/MARKS
	Question and answer (boardgame) -Question: reading a question in its written form outloud -Answer: responding the question formulated	At least 2	10 min. (2 minutes per student)	10 marks max.
	Short talk "Talk for one minute about the subject on the card. This is followed by a further minute of questions from other candidates and possibly the examiner."	1	10 min.(2 min. per student)	10 marks max.
TOTAL	2 task types	At least 3	4 min. per speaker	20 marks max.

At the time of writing this paper, there were no sample clips showing children performing PTE YL Springboard on the internet.

Taking a closer look at the sample papers available at http://pearson.pl/pte-yl/sites/default/files/2016-03/Documents/PTEYL_Guide_Springboard.pdf , it specifies the following information regarding task 1:

'What candidates do: In groups of five with an examiner, test takers play a board game. They take it in turns to throw a dice and then move their counters according to the throw of the dice. Each square on the board has a question written on it. When a candidate's counter lands on a square, the examiner directs them to address the question to another test taker in the group, who must respond. It is then the next person's turn. The game continues in this way until all candidates have responded to at least two of the questions on the board. The task lasts for 10 minutes (5 candidates).'

It can be noted how, according to the above, a test-taker's production would be enough provided it included at least two answers to the following type of questions:

- *'How often do you go out with your parents?'*
- *'Who cleans your bedroom?'*

Task 2 in the PTE YL (Springboard) test would include students carrying out a one-minute monologue after which there would be questions carried out either by the co-participants (it is not specified whether they receive any sort of prompt) and/or by the examiner.

While this test includes question formation in addition to answering simple questions, the type of interaction triggered does seem to be lead to 'institutional-formulaic talk', even more so in the task 2: monologue, an activity that might have no parallel for such young students out of the context of the exam.

As a whole, it can be said that the tests above have a clear focus on the provision of factual information on the test-takers' part via the answering of questions in an individual OPI. This might be partly justified by several factors such as the limited level of the students and the linguistic objectives at A1, e.g., *describing people, animals, objects and places very simply, stating simple facts,* or the fact that young children often rely on adults to manage conversations for them (Scarcella & Higa, 1981), as well as practical considerations regarding ease of administration and scoring, to name but a few.

Notwithstanding this, it seems the tests' constructs (and hierarchical examiner/test taker layout) have left aside key aspects to SL speaking, namely NoM and interactional competence, in their assessment, very much in the same way that teacher-fronted situations produce less modification of interaction than group and dyad interaction patterns do (Doughty & Pica, 1986).

If the effectiveness of a specific format is also to be assessed by the features of the language samples it generates, then we believe there is a gap in current A1 EFL tests as regards NoM and interactional competence.

Consequently, the present thesis constitutes an attempt to evaluate an oral testing format (paired OPI) which, although unheard of at this level (A1), appears to be positively endorsed by SLA research on interaction and acquisition.

1.2.3.1.Qualities of good speaking tests

In this subsection we would like to discuss some of the stances adopted by different scholars when designing or assessing tasks used in the assessment of oral proficiency today. Different researchers hold different views on the qualities any 'good' speaking test ought to have. All of the following have, to some extent, been influential prior to the design and piloting of the tasks in this thesis.

Bachman and Palmer (1996), outline the four qualities any useful language test should have as follows:

- *Reliability, i.e.,* the consistency with which a test measures ability; one way in which interviews may be unreliable is if two different examiners judge the speaking ability of the same learner differently – a line for further research which exceeds the scope of the present study.

- *Construct validity*, that is, the quality of a test that allows us to make interpretations of the scores on the test. In the tasks in the present study we are not assessing the students' capacity to 'know' specific data related to age, colours, or formulaic factual information. We are focusing on the tasks' ability to provide samples of language comparable to those in existing A1 tests in terms of duration, overall production and turn-takes, but, more importantly, we want to evaluate their ability to promote interactional competence, i.e., how speakers collaborate with their conversational partners (He & Young, 1998; Kramsch, 1986), via NoM, an aspect which, as we have seen, does not seem to hold much weight in A1 oral tests today.

- *Authenticity.* This refers to the degree of correspondence between the characteristics of a task that learners are required to perform on a test and the characteristics of a non-test task in the SL /FL. Here we would like to cast doubt on the extent to which an individual OPI such as the ones mentioned in the above section, i.e., interviews, constitute an authentic reflection of the type of tasks that a beginner student faces outside the context of a test.

- *Interactiveness.* In He and Young's (1998) words, this does not refer to interaction between the test taker and the examiner, but to "the degree to which the learner simultaneously draws on different kinds of knowledge—both cognitive and affective—in doing a test" (He & Young, 1998, p. 3). In accordance with Bachman and

> Palmer there are several kinds of knowledge interacting in the learner's performance at a test task: knowledge of the SL/FL, knowledge on how to overcome communication difficulties in performance (strategic competence), knowledge of how to organize and plan a task (metacognitive strategies), topical knowledge, and learners' emotional reactions to particular topics and tasks (affective schemata). For Bachman and Palmer examples of highly interactive testing include role plays and an extended conversation, since both tests "require language, require learners to plan ahead, and involve learners in topics that interest them" (He & Young, 1998, p. 3).

In the session *'Putting Tests to the Test'* at the 2016 IATEFL, Galaczi and Khabbazbashi concurred with Bachman and Palmer in some of the aspects mentioned, and summarized some of the qualities of 'good tests' as having to do with *construct validity, reliability* and *positive impact,* referred to as the 'washback effect' (e.g., Heaton, 1988; Yoffee, 1997) in the sections above. They also highlight the feature of being *practical to develop and deliver* (Galaczi & Khabbazbashi, 2016).

Similarly, a test review by Bailey (2005) on the strengths and weaknesses of the Cambridge YL speaking tests evaluated the following aspects:

- *Validity*
- *Reliability*

- *Fairness*, including
    - *Developmental appropriateness*
    - *Cultural sensitivity*
- *Practicality*, including, in turn
    - *Administration*
    - *Scoring*
- *Impact*

Carpenter et al (1995) devised an oral interview procedure for assessing second language abilities in children, and intended their test to be (summarized):

- *Pragmatically appropriate* both linguistically and extralinguistically.
- *Global*, i.e., capable of eliciting and analyse a wide variety of forms and functions, in order to determine as accurately as possible a complete picture of the child's overall capabilities.
- *Comparable across children and programmes.*
- *Able to tap into a range of content, as well as a range of speech styles.*
- *Developmentally appropriate*.
- *Fun.*
-

(Carpenter et al., 1995, pp. 163, 164)

Taking all the above into consideration, we may summarise that the primal objective of the task in the present study is not to assess the students' production according to existing rating scales, but to provide a construct

which triggers genuine interaction with low-level EFL populations, namely children and adults, in order to

- Explore differences and commonalities in their interactions, and
- Provide evidence for the validity of paired OPT as a means to achieve wider spectra of language samples (understood as being able to elicit a wider range of features of interaction) than individual OPIs do, incidentally facilitating FLA.

Although of unquestionable importance, some of the qualities mentioned in this subsection, e.g., (inter-rater) scoring reliability, administration and practicality, to name but some, evidently exceed the scope of this dissertation. We expect, however, the paired OPI tasks in this study (see section 2.4. *The Task*) to respond positively to the claims above regarding construct validity, authenticity, interactiveness, positive impact, and fun.

Summary

In this section we have summarized important information about the multiple ways age-related considerations impinge on current EFL oral proficiency testing. We have also compared the features of the two main layouts forming the basis for the second part of this dissertation. We have concluded with a specific subsection which focused on existing tasks in A1 oral tests today, with the aim of explaining the design chosen for the tasks in the present study.

Chapter 2. THE STUDY

This study analyses the interactions of twenty (20) children and fourteen (14) adults at an A1 level of the CEFR. All participants resolved two story-telling tasks with an age and level matched peer and two story-telling tasks with an adult expert in order to answer two research questions which are, in turn, located in two major research areas: the interactionist framework and the assessment of oral production. Overlapping research niches from both contexts justify the validity of our study.

On the one hand there is an urgent need for more research regarding EFL children interaction, (Azkarai & Imaz Agirre, 2015; M.P. García Mayo & A. Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2015; Lázaro-Ibarrola & Azpilicueta-Martínez, 2015; Lázaro-Ibarrola & Hidalgo, 2017; Philp & Tognini, 2009; Tognini, 2008; Tognini & Oliver, 2012), at a time when we are witnesses to a vertiginous expansion not only of English Language Teaching (ELT) in the primary sector (Cameron, 2003; Kubanek-German, 1998), but also of CLIL and immersion programmes (Eurydice, 2006). This urgency is all the more clamorous when the latter type of programmes yield comparatively lower results in the level of the productive skills than in reception skills[13] (Pérez-Cañado, 2012). In addition to this fact, there are – to the best of our knowledge - no studies specifically analysing and comparing the interactions of the same

[13] Receptive skills in these programmes reach, depending on multiple variables, native-like proficiency.

children performing the same task in level-matched peers and with a proficient adult speaker. Likewise, while research on child-child vs. adult-adult interactions exists there are few studies doing so at similar and very low levels of proficiency (A1, beginners). The different interactional features of these dyad types will be interesting, on the one hand, to inform classroom practices where there is always an adult proficient speaker (the teacher) and a group of young learners of relatively similar levels of proficiency, but also to better understand the differences between adult and child interactions.

Regarding the second motivation for this dissertation, fin-de-siècle findings on SLA (e.g., Interaction Hypothesis; Output Hypothesis, M.H. Long, 1980, 1996; Swain, 1985), shifted the view that "speaking in a second language (L2) generally meant information transfer" to "an acknowledgement that speaking involved negotiating meaning" (Ducasse & Brown, 2009, p. 424), and led to the –commonly accepted - implementation of the paired OPT as the format of choice at the top levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) of English for general purposes worldwide. This was done on the grounds that paired OPT allow for the assessment of a broader range of skills than do the more traditional interviewer tests (individual OPT). However, paired OPTs have not been adopted for lower level (pre-A1 to A2) EFL speaking tests, where individual OPTs still seem to be the norm. In this context, the second objective of this thesis is to explore the suitability and validity of paired OPT

as an instrument to achieve a wide spectrum of language samples in the oral proficiency of A1 EFL children and adults.

With these objectives in mind, in this chapter we will present the research questions (subsection 2.1.), followed by the hypotheses entertained (2.2.). After these there will be sections including detailed descriptions of the subjects taking part (2.3.), as well as the tasks and materials deployed (2.4.) and the research procedure followed (2.5.). Finally, we will dissect the elements and criteria used in the analysis and codification of our data (2.6.).

2.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As stated above, in this thesis we analyse the interactions of adults and children while performing interactive tasks with peers and with an expert. The objective is twofold: (i) On the one hand, we intend to better understand the peculiarities and differences of child and adult interactions as well as the same features when they did so in a peer-peer or a peer-expert interactive format. (ii) The second target of the present dissertation is to evaluate the suitability and validity of the paired OPT format, i.e., peer-peer, as a means to achieve a wide spectrum of language samples in the oral proficiency of A1 EFL children and adults. Due to the common intrinsic nature of both research objectives, i.e., the analysis of interactional features, the coding scheme and elements of analysis will be used in order to provide an answer to both research goals.

On the basis of the theoretical background presented above on Interaction and Assessment of Oral Proficiency, the following research questions will be entertained:

RQ1: What are the characteristics and differences of children and adults' interactions while performing a tasks at level A1 of the CEFR?

In order to answer RQ1 we will analyse interactional patterns according to Oliver's classification of conversational strategies (Oliver,

1998); we will also investigate the influence of their shared L1 (Spanish), using a bespoke coding scheme that partially emerged from the data. Finally we will also address the particularities of children and adults' interactions regarding the task-solving tactics displayed, i.e., their ability to perform the tasks successfully. The following combinations of interlocutors will be analysed (where all children and adults share the same level of proficiency and where the expert is an adult proficient speaker):

a. Learner-learner:
    i. Child- child
    ii. Adult-adult
b. Learner-expert:
    i. Child -expert
    ii. Adult -expert

RQ2: Does the paired OPT format, i.e., peer-peer, constitute a valid and suitable layout for the assessment the oral proficiency of A1 EFL children and adults?

Following Brooks (2009), and given that this thesis is not focussing on scores or rating scales, we will focus on the features of the interaction generated in order to evaluate the validity of the task at hand. For it we will supplement the data mentioned in RQ1 with other aspects of the learners' performance, such as duration, amount of production, i.e., number of

utterances, and turn-taking patterns, and will compare them with the individual format. Finally we will also compare the results in children with some of the existing tests mentioned in the second chapter of this thesis. In RQ2, the following interactive layouts will be considered:

a. Child learner-expert (Individual OPT) / Child-child (Paired OPT)
b. Adult learner-expert (Individual OPT)/ Adult-adult (Paired OPT)

2.2 HYPOTHESES

Hypotheses regarding the peculiarities and differences of child and adult interactions in a peer-peer or a peer-expert interactive format.

Research has shown that children are able to successfully interact and negotiate for meaning, although adults and children (8–13- year of age) display significant differences between them in their proportional use of NoM strategies, particularly in the latter using far fewer comprehension checks than adults (Oliver 1998, 2000). The author related this fact to a developmental effect by which children seemed to focus on their own output more readily than on their interlocutor's. An earlier study carried out with English-speaking children learning Japanese by Carpenter et al (1995), however, had displayed a conspicuous lack of clarification requests in their data (Carpenter et al., 1995, p. 172). Additionally, a study by Pinter (2006, p. 620) also suggested adults produced higher levels of repetition than children when performing the same task. In general, findings support lower quantities of negotiation moves in children than in adult learners.

Consequently, it should be expected that both children and adults in the present study will:

i. Manage to negotiate for meaning in order to understand each other and complete the task successfully.

ii. Children will make a less abundant use of certain NoM strategies; more specifically:

   a. Children will provide fewer instances of comprehension checks than adults.

   b. Clarification requests and repetition rates might also be lower in children than those in adults.

Additionally, and, as mentioned in the interaction chapter, less proficient learners are thought to negotiate due to greater difficulties to understand one another (Gass & Varonis, 1985a.; Oliver, 2002), existing evidence supporting a child-child categorisation in which the amount of NoM is inversely proportional to the level of proficiency of the speakers (Oliver, 2002). However, it is also known that the suitability of interactive activities with very low level learners was cast doubt on by a recent study by Lázaro-Ibarrola and Azpilicueta-Martínez (2015), hinting at a minimum 'access point' below which negotiation for meaning appeared to be jeopardised. Although not explicitely worded as a hypothesis question *per se*, we intend this thesis to shed light on this aspect of unquestionable interest.

Regarding L1 use, previous research points at low-proficiency learners in FL classrooms resorting to their L1 instead of using the TL (Alegría de la Colina & García Mayo, 2009; DiCamilla & Antón, 2012; Tognini & Oliver, 2012). Findings in other studies appear to be mixed, however. Pinter's (2006) yielded a significantly higher proportion of children

speakers' turns containing explicit L1 terms: 15% (children) as opposed to 3% (adults). By contrast, research by Lázaro-Ibarrola and Azpilicueta-Martínez (2015) on Spanish EFL children with a very low command of the TL showed an extremely low rate of explicit L1 terms (0.52%). Hence:

ii. No clear predictions are made as to the rates of explicit L1 words to be generated in each group.

As for the task-solving tactics, the study by Pinter (2006) mentioned above also highlighted how children used fewer systematic and predictable task-related strategies, leading adults to outperform them significantly and achieve a higher task-solving success rate.

iii. Adults are expected to perform the tasks at hand more efficiently than children, and to achieve a higher success rate through the use of specific task-solving tactics.

<u>Hypotheses regarding the suitability and validity of the paired OPT format, i.e., peer-peer, as a layout for the assessment of the oral proficiency of A1 EFL children and adults</u>

Studies comparing the validity of the paired versus the individual OPT format seem to focus on the upper levels of the CEFR, and, in general terms, they suggest that the former leads to more symmetrical, less institutional interaction eliciting a wider range of features of interaction than the individual format (e.g., L. Brooks, 2009; Ducasse, 2008; Ducasse & Brown, 2009; A. M. Ducasse & A. Brown, 2011; Galaczi, 2004, 2013). However, to the best of our knowledge at the time of writing, there are no studies specifically comparing both formats at the lowest level of the CEFR, A1, with different populations, namely children and adults.

Regarding the interlocutor effect on the language produced, work by Davis (2009) suggested that, when a learner was paired with a much lower-level partner (as is the individual OPI in the present thesis) the interaction tended to be asymmetric. Similarly, it is known that children are known to often rely on adults to manage conversations for them (Scarcella & Higa, 1981).

In addition, a quick glance at the language samples of existing A1 EFL individual OPT allows us to find scant – if at all –instances of features of interaction (understood as NoM strategies in the present study) other than 'repetition'. Based on research findings on ESL /EFL low-level task-based interaction with children and adults (e.g., M.P. García Mayo & A. Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2015; Lázaro-Ibarrola & Hidalgo, 2017; Oliver, 2000a; Oliver, 2002), we predict that:

i. The paired OPT in the present study will elicit a wider range of interactional features than
    a. The individual format.
    b. Already existing formats, namely Cambridge YL (Movers) and Trinity GESE Grade II.

Due to the lack of research analysing the degree of L1 influence and task-solving strategy use of these two populations in both interactive modes:

ii. No specific hypothesis is formulated as for the degree of L1 influence of children and adults when performing individual or paired interaction.

iii. No specific hypothesis is formulated as for the task-solving strategy use of children and adults when performing individual or paired interaction.

Finally, in accordance with studies advocating the benefits of the paired interactive format (e.g., L. Brooks, 2009; Ducasse, 2008; Ducasse & Brown, 2009; A. M. Ducasse & A. Brown, 2011; Galaczi, 2004, 2013), and, in view of the promising findings in recent ESL/EFL interaction with children and adults (e.g., M.P. García Mayo & A. Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2015; Lázaro-Ibarrola & Hidalgo, 2017; Oliver, 2000a; Oliver, 2002), we predict that:

iv. Duration, amount of production and turn-taking patterns in the paired OPT (children) will be comparable to those in the individual format and in the tests abovementioned.

Still, given the scarcity of research comparing interactions of EFL adults and children at this levels of the CEFR (A1), and, in addition to the possible differences in the methodologies implemented in the courses the subjects were attending (in addition to the cultural, personal, etc.), it seems only sensible to entertain the hypotheses above regarding both NoM and validity of the task for oral assessment with genuine scientific curiosity.

2.3 PARTICIPANTS

Twenty (20) children– eleven (11) girls and nine (9) boys-, and fourteen (14) adults –twelve (12) women and two (2) men - participated in the present study.

All children taking part were studying their Year 3 course (8-9 years old) at Lorenzo Goicoa Primary School, a state school located in Pamplona, a city in Northern Spain. At the beginning of the study children were told that they were going to take part in a game in English. They were reassured that this was not a test or examination of any sort. Parents were informed that their children's performances would remain anonymous and limited for research purposes exclusively. Due permission was granted by both parents and the school itself.

Eight (8) of the adult subjects participating were enrolled at level A1 course at *Centro Universitario de Idiomas a Distancia* (CUID-UNED), while six (6) of them were doing so at the *That's English!* programme at *Escuela Oficial de Idiomas a Distancia de Navarra* (EOIDNA).

All subjects in this PhD shared Spanish (or Spanish plus another language in the case of simultaneous bilinguals) as their L1 and had limited access to English-speaking interaction outside their classes.

The proficiency of spoken English for the children in this study was based on the school's internal assessment records in the EFL subject and their performance in the diagnostic tests carried out by the local administration the

previous year, tests which the author of this study took part in designing. Neither high nor low-performing students were included in order to guarantee maximum homogeneity in their proficiency levels. Likewise, the oral proficiency level of the adult group was confirmed by the teachers in charge of their A1 groups. In both cases, adults and children, any form of external oral proficiency A1 test (e.g., Cambridge 'Movers' or any other type of picture-based test) was discarded as a tool to confirm their proficiency, first of all, because the internal assessment offered clear and professional information on the proficiency level of the participants and, second, because this would have entailed a certain degree of similarity with the tasks used in this study and might have had an impact in terms of familiarity with the task or the interlocutor (see Chambers et al., 2012 for further information).

The researcher in this study (coded as 'expert' following the terminology frequently used in SLA research and for the sake of clarity) is a proficient speaker of English and has vast experience both as an EFL teacher and oral examiner with both children and adults.

A summary of the partipants' characteristics related to age and proficiency can be seen in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Participants' profile

	Children	Adults
Average Age (Mean): Range:	8,5	47 (46.60) 31-69
English Proficiency	Pre A1/A1	Pre A1/A1

2.4 THE TASK

The objective of the task in the present study is not to rate the students' production according to existing rating scales – but rather to provide evidence for the validity of the paired format activity as a means to achieve wider spectra of language samples than individual OPIs do, and facilitate FL learning via interaction. In point of fact, "defining the construct of speaking ability on the basis of test scores is not considered a good idea because it does not help (test designers) think about what is the best way to design a test" (He & Young, 1998, p. 2).

The tasks at hand were designed to require the production of oral output. Bearing the above in mind, the tasks in the present study meld a spot-the-difference referential task design with storytelling, and have the following layout: one of the participants ('narrator' role[14]) is provided with a story which had been arranged sequentially in five pictures, while their counterpart ('story builder') had 8 jumbled-up pictures which included the ones in the story plus three distracter pictures which were similar but not identical to those in the narrator's story. One subject narrated the story to the other so that the latter had to arrange the story chronologically and leave the three wrong pictures out. A screen was placed between students in order to minimize non-verbal communication. A detailed description of the task can be seen in the following table:

[14] Note contrast with Cambridge's *Young Learners* (Movers), in which the examiner tells the examinee the beginning of the story and the latter narrates the remaining of it.

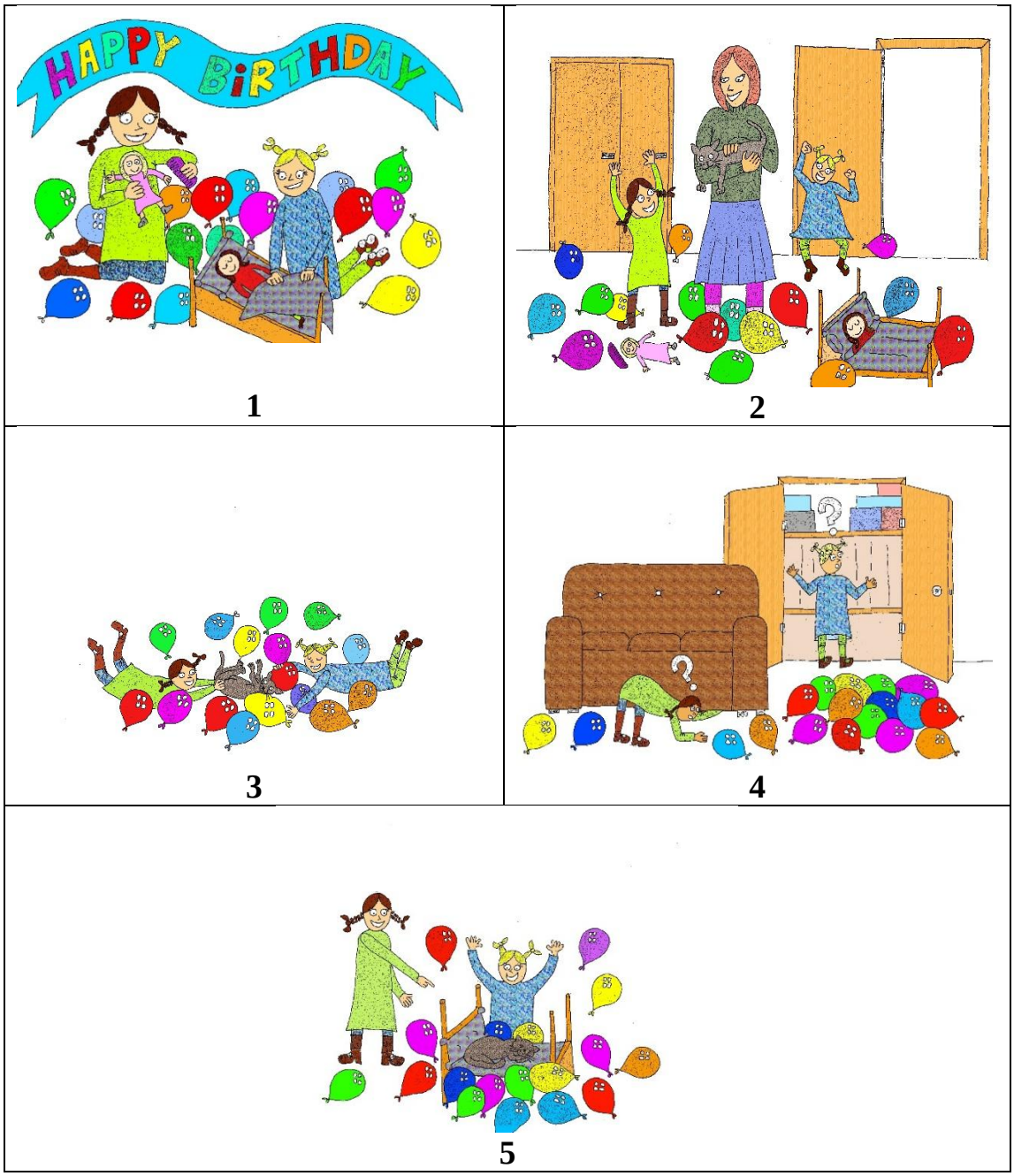
Table 3. Task description

	Story-based Picture Placement Task	
Student	**Narrator**	**Story Builder**
Description	Without showing their partner their pictures, **they must narrate/ describe a story** in order their peers to place the story in the right order and leave the wrong distracter pictures aside.	Without showing their partner their pictures, **they must interact with the narrator** in order to place the story in the right order and leave the wrong distracter pictures aside.
Type	Mixed: Information Gap Task + Storytelling	
Flow of information	Two-way	
Exchange of information	Required	
Outcome	Closed (Students had to end up arranging the story in a specific order) but	
Use of language	Open (The language used is unpredictable and might vary significantly)	

As we will explain in detail in the 'procedure' section (2.5.), every participant performed the task four times. There were different stories, but all of them followed a similar procedure and had a similar level of difficulty (see more

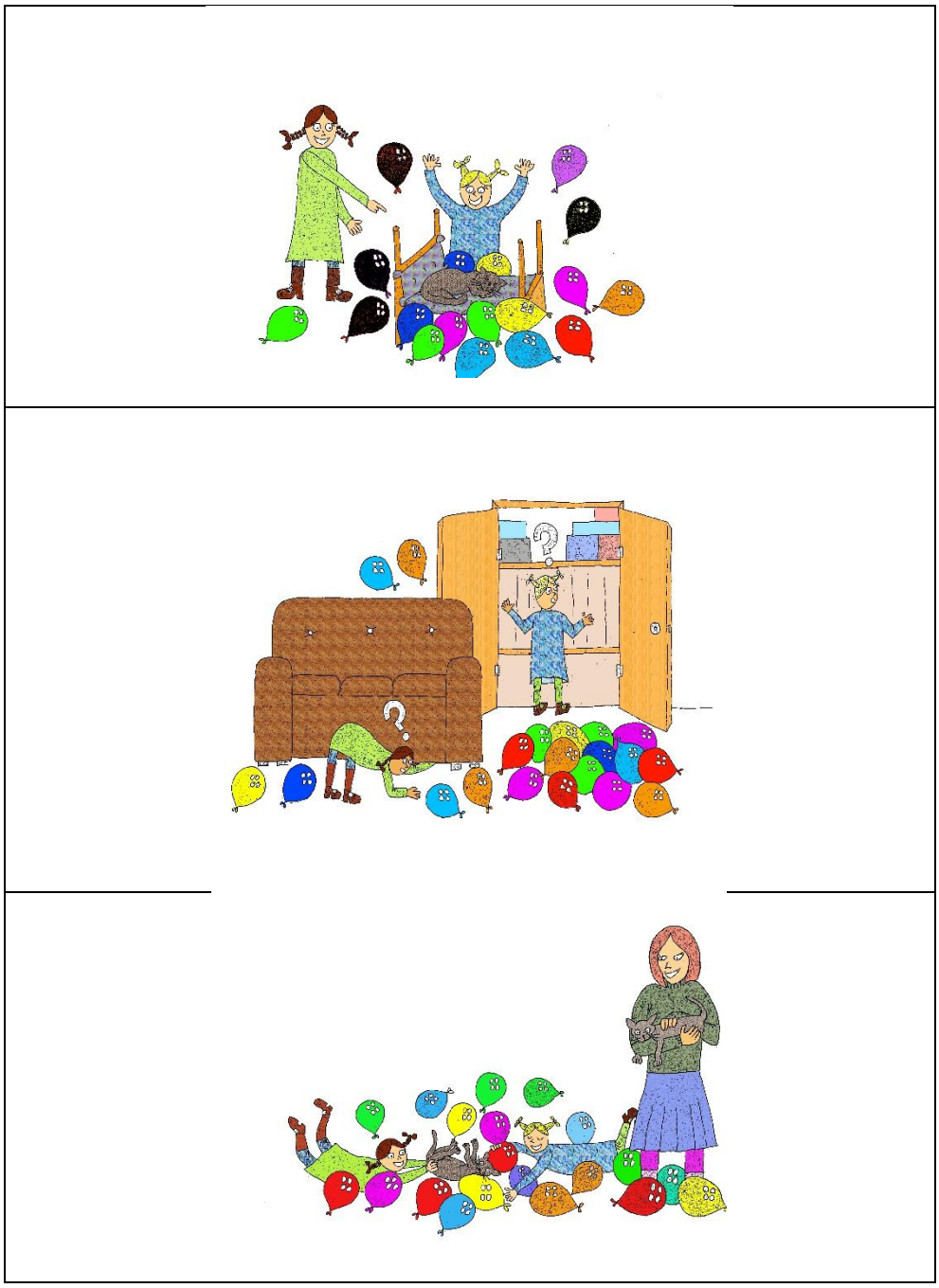
on this below). In order to facilitate the readers' understanding of the task we provide them with one of the stories here (Day 1 Task 1: *Birthday Party*):

Narrator's view:



Storybuilder's view:

Pictures above randomly placed plus the following distracters (also randomly placed):



Note how differences between some of the pictures and their corresponding distracters were subtle in order to generate misunderstandings and the corresponding negotiations. Below, we describe the differentiating elements in the story presented in the example above. In Appendix B we provide all the stories and explain the differentiating elements.

- D1T1:
    - **Item 3**: Girls playing with the cat on the floor.
        - ***Distracter:*** Girls playing with the cat on the floor but their mum is also present.
    - **Item 4:** Girls are looking for the cat in a balloon-filled lounge.
        - ***Distracter***: Girls are looking for the cat in a balloon-filled lounge, and two of the balloons are floating in the air.
    - **Item 5:** The cat was sleeping in a balloon-surrounded cot.
        - ***Distracter***: The cat was sleeping in a balloon-surrounded cot, and some of the balloons are black.

The rationale behind the distracters was shaped according to two mean reasons:

- Triggering the communicative skills and language requirements at level A1 of the CEFR (specified in 1.2.3. *Tasks in oral proficiency tests*.)
- Distracter pictures appeared random both in terms of the order or coherence within the story (i.e. students could not 'anticipate' which picture in the story was more likely to include a distracter), in order to trigger negotiation. In fact, some of them were plainly illogical:
    - Example: D2T1 item 2: the man in picture 2 is wearing the boots and is wearing his coat, whereas the same man in picture 3 seems to be putting his coat on again.

This apparent 'lack of coherence' was intended to 'force' negotiation of meaning by leading those students following a 'logical strategy' and not interacting with their partners (i.e., those who might have believed that the task at hand was purely about 'guessing') to make mistakes and end up ultimately negotiating for meaning.

The task used in this PhD also borrows obliquely from Cambridge's 'odd one out' activity in that the subject acting as 'story builder' must leave the distracter pictures out.

The suitability of the stories had been checked through the application of similar tasks in one section of the diagnostic evaluation of Primary Education Bilingual Schools in Navarre in 2013 and 2014 with 616 Year 2

students. Since the task had not been used with adults, it was piloted in March 2014 with eighteen (18) adults from the CUID-UNED programme, comprising six (6) A1-level and twelve (12) B1-level students, bearing in mind that, originally this was part of a larger study which included children and adults from levels A1, A2 and B1.

All the illustrations used in the study were hand drawn by Israel Azpilicueta-Martínez, and edited and coloured in by the writer of this work using Gimp software (see Appendix B).

In order to guarantee identical input, and, based on Brown's notion that the unpredictability or *impromptu* nature of the test interaction might lead to a lack of standardisation across interviews, and hence potential unfairness (A. B. Brown, 2003), a fixed interlocutor frame was used by the researcher on D1T1 (see Appendix C).

2.5 PROCEDURE

As mentioned above, an initial piloting was carried out in March and April 2014. Children data for the current PhD was collected between 14th and 23rd April 2015, while adult data collection spanned between 11th November 2014 and 11th May 2015. Total time spent on data collection took 7 months.

Adult participants had to be paired up in accordance with their timetable availability; due to this fact some of the *That's English!* Programme students were acquainted with each other (those who belonged to the same groups), while some others were not, while all UNED participants knew their partners before the study.

Children pairing was semi-random following alphabetical order. Before pairing the students, teachers were asked whether they reckoned any students ought (or not) to be paired in any particular way but no students were deemed particular consideration in this respect.

The data from each participant were collected at four times as follows:

Day 1: Tasks 1 and 2 (learner-expert)

At time 1 (henceforth Day 1), every participant performed two of the story-telling tasks with the expert (the researcher) i.e., recreating an individual OPT format. Firstly, the expert narrated the story to the learner, who had to build up the story (D1T1). An interlocutor frame was used in order to guarantee the same degree of input in all cases. Such input was limited so

as to maximise the use of NoM strategies on the students' part. Immediately after finishing D1T1, the expert and the student swapped roles and the latter acted as narrator, while the expert had to build up the story.

Day 1. Task 1 (D1T1). Expert narrates to learner.

Day 1. Task 2 (D1T2). Learner narrates to expert.

Day 2: Task 1 and 2 (learner-learner)

Seven (7) days later, at time 2 (hereinafter Day 2) the tasks exclusively involved student-student interaction (paired OPI). Firstly, one of the students narrated the story to their story-building partner (D2T1), while they swapped roles afterwards (D2T2).

Day 2. Task 1 (D2T1). Learner B narrates to learner A.

Day 2. Task 2 (D2T2). Learner A narrates to learner B.

After the study all adult participants were asked to fill in a survey including biographical data

In order to maximize participant-friendliness and an instinctive understanding of the activity at hand, task 1 on day 1 (D1T1) had the researcher narrating the story to the students. Even though this fact might have entailed a certain degree of influence on the students – especially in terms of the language and stance adopted by the researcher (see *Limitations* section) – it was considered a reasonable trade-off in order participants to get

acquainted with the task while minimizing the amount of explicit instructions required.

As mentioned in advance above, the design of the study itself has outlined two different participant roles – 'narrators' and 'story builders' - depending on the task at hand, as noted on Table 4:

Table 4. Tasks and role distribution

<table>
<tr><th colspan="4">STORY-BASED PICTURE PLACEMENT TASK</th></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">DAY 1</th><th rowspan="2"></th><th colspan="2">DAY 2</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Task 1 (D1T1)
Birthday Party
(Individual OPI)</td><td>Researcher as narrator</td><td rowspan="5">7-day interval</td><td rowspan="2">Task 1 (D2T1)
On a Rainy Day
(Paired OPI)</td><td>Student B as narrator</td></tr>
<tr><td>All students as story builders</td><td>Student A as story builder</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Task 2 (D1T2)
The Snowman
(Individual OPI)</td><td>All students as narrators</td><td rowspan="2">Task 2 (D2T2)
The Toyshop
(Paired OPI)</td><td>Student A as narrator</td></tr>
<tr><td>Researcher as story builder</td><td>Student B as story builder</td></tr>
</table>

The impact of such roles on the language produced and its implications, as well as the possible influence of a particular task's characteristics (vocabulary implied, interest in the story, etc.) will be discussed in detail in the 'Results', 'Discussion' and 'Conclusions' section.

An integrated webcam and a voice recorder were made use of in order to have all students video and voice-recorded.

2.6 DATA ANALYSIS AND CODIFICATION

In the present section we will provide a detailed description of the features of our subjects' performance selected for analysis, together with the scheme used to examine and code their production.

At this point it is appropriate to bear in mind that certain elements of the coding scheme and data, namely the analysis of interactional features, will be partly used to provide an answer to both research goals, due to their shared relevance and common interactive approach inherent to the present dissertation.

Due to the small sample sizes, non-parametric tests were used at all times. The Mann-Whitney U-test (a non- parametric equivalent of the Student's *t*-test) was used when comparing children and adult interactions, while the Wilcoxon signed-rank test (a non- parametric equivalent alternative to the matched-pairs *t*-test) served to analyse differences within the same population. Significance level was fixed at $p = 0.05$. All quantitative analyses were conducted using SPSS Version 24. The interacting combinations compared and statistic tests deployed can be seen in the following table:

Table 5. Interactive combinations and statistical methods used

RQ1		
a.	Child- child / Adult-adult	Mann-Whitney U-test
b.	Child –expert / Adult -expert	
RQ2		
1.	Child -expert (Individual OPT) / Child-child (Paired OPT)	Wilcoxon signed-rank test
2.	Adult -expert (Individual OPT) / Adult-adult (Paired OPT)	

All conversational interactions were transcribed verbatim and amounted to a total time of 12 hours, 46 minutes and 29 seconds.

In order to facilitate the readers' comprehension of the data coding schemes, the research questions are recapitulated here. Our first research question (RQ1), i.e., *what are the differences between adults and children while performing interaction tasks*, will focus on the participant's NoM strategies (Oliver, 1998; Lázaro Ibarrola and Hidalgo, 2017), as well as the influence of their shared L1 (Spanish), the latter using a coding scheme that partially emerged from the data. Unlike previous research on EFL children interaction (Azkarai & Imaz Agirre, 2015; M. P. García Mayo & A. Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2015; Lázaro-Ibarrola & Azpilicueta-Martínez, 2015; Lázaro-Ibarrola & Hidalgo, 2017; Philp & Tognini, 2009; Tognini, 2008; Tognini & Oliver, 2012) we also analysed the specific characteristics of children and adults' interactions regarding the tactics displayed, as well as their ability to

complete the tasks successfully. A detailed description of these elements is provided below.

The second research question (RQ2) seeks to *evaluate the suitability and validity of the paired OPT format*, i.e., peer-peer, *as a means to achieve a wide spectrum of language samples in the oral proficiency of A1 EFL children and adults*. Like previous studies comparing individual and paired formats (e.g., L. Brooks, 2009; Galaczi, 2004, 2013), we will do so by analysing the construct validity of the format and tasks at hand in terms of their capacity to elicit a wide range of features of interaction (operationalized mainly via interactional adjustments – in RQ1) . We will supplement the data in RQ1 with other aspects of the learners' performance, namely duration, amount of production, i.e., number of utterances and turn-taking patterns, and will compare the children's results with officially sanctioned A1 examination samples from Cambridge YL (Movers) and Trinity GESE grade II.

In order to answer both research questions, the following elements were coded. These elements have already been mentioned in the theoretical background; however, to facilitate understanding for the reader, we will provide a brief definition and include an example of each category:

Examples of the coded categories:

NoM strategies

- Clarification requests

Clarification requests refer to *"those utterances made by the listener to clarify what the speaker had said, and included statements such as "I don't understand", wh-questions, yes/no questions, and tag questions* (see Long, 1980, 1983b; Pica & Doughty, 1985b)"

(20) Student A: *Yes.*
Expert: *Shall I go to the number two, Olga?*
Student A: ***Erm… erm…. I don't understand.*** [Clarification request]

- Confirmation checks

This classification comprises *"those utterances made by the listener to establish that the preceding utterance had been heard and understood correctly, but they included repetition of all or part of the utterance accompanied by rising intonation"* (Long, 1980; Pica & Doughty, 1985b), as illustrated by the following example (21):

(21) Student B: *Five. Mmm…. They go out (unint) and the… sun is in the sky… there is a… dry?*
Student A: ***Dry?***
[Confirmation check]
Student B: *Dry. The… the mountains… there are…. Mountains and…. The, the boy, erm… has got a…. umbrella?*

- Comprehension checks

Comprehension checks were those utterances made by the speaker to check whether a preceding utterance had been correctly understood by the listener and consisted primarily of questions, either tag questions, repetition with rising intonation, or questions such as *"Do you understand?"* (M.H. Long, 1980, 1983b; Pica & Doughty, 1985b)

(22) Student A: *Erm, erm… yes, yes. The boy, erm… is between, and the girl, at ee, and the father.*
Student B: *Ok.* (pause) *Ok.*
Student A: ***Number four?*** [Comprehension check]
Student B: *Four.*

- Acknowledgments

They comprise expressions such as *"ok", "yes", "I know"* which express the speaker's understanding of what their interlocutor has said in order to confirm that they may progress in the conversation (Lázaro-Ibarrola & Hidalgo, 2017), as in the next example (23):

(23) Student A: *I don't stand… The… Ah! Que… The one. Picture, no?*
Researcher: *You have to take that picture and put it on the number one.*
Student A: ***Ah! Ok, ok.***
[Acknowledgement]

- Repetitions
  - Self-repetitions

Following Pica & Doughty (1985b), this parameter included the speaker's (partial, exact and expanded) repetitions of lexical items from their own preceding utterances within five speaking turns:

(24) **Student A:** *Then they go to the bookshop and the girl and boy they are sleeping but they are thinking in the toyshop.*
Student B: *Ok.*
Student A: *Then, when his dad pass to the car to* ***the toyshop*** *the girl and the boy there are asleep. Yeah?*
[Self-repetition]
Student B: *Yeah.*

  - 'Other'-repetitions

They include the speaker's (partial, exact and expanded) repetitions of lexical items from an interlocutor's preceding utterances within five speaking turns (Pica & Doughty, 1985b).

(25) Researcher: *But we're speaking about picture number 4 now, yes? You said that the nose is missing.*
Student: ***Yes, the nose is missing.*** [Other-repetition]

Notes on data collection (repetition)

1. Repetition (self or other) of words *'yes'* or *'no'* on D1T1 were not included in the present study, since they did not seem to be used as conversational adjustments, but rather as a mere answer to the questions they were being asked by the researcher.

2. Likewise, those instances of language which could be classified within another conversational strategy or L1 use category have not been coded as repetitions. Consider the following examples:

(26) Researcher: *Is the snowman wearing a hat?*
Student A: ***Hat?*** [Comprehension check]
Researcher: *Is the snowman wearing a hat?*
Student A: ***Hat?*** *Sí.* [Comprehension check]

Note how student 'A' asks for confirmation (via confirmation checks) for the word *'hat'* and her repetition in the following turn: *'hat'*. Student 'A's' second utterance has also been coded as a 'confirmation check' rather than as an instance of repetition.

3. In the following type of repetition of lexical items:

(27) Student A: *"A white coat or a brown coat."*
Student B: ***"A brown coat (1) and a white coat (1)."*** [Confirmation check (2)]

Each lexical cluster (e.g., 'brown coat') was coded as a single example of repetition, since the order within the sentence and/or the words linking them were not the same.

L1 Influence

- L1 use

Following previous research within the interactionist framework (e.g., Alegría de la Colina & García Mayo, 2009; DiCamilla & Antón, 2012; Tognini & Oliver, 2012), L1 words will not be classified into subcategories, since it falls beyond the scope of the present dissertation. This part comprises explicit use of L1 lexical items, illustrated as follows (28):

(28) Student B: *Ah, erm… erm…they have, they have, erm…*
Student A: *The boy…* ***triste*** *(English 'sad') Sad? Or, or…*
Student B: *Smile? No.*

Different scholars have focused on diverse elements in order to code cross-linguistic influence in their research (e.g., borrowings and lexical inventions, in Navés, Miralpeix, and Celaya (2005)), yet, due to the scope of this dissertation, we will classify explicit L1 instances under the same category. That notwithstanding, we provide the reader with a succinct array of all the types of explicit L1 instances displayed by participants below:

- **Adult:** *Erm… Sunny?* ***O sea*** *('I mean')… There are very… Ah!* [Automatic expression]

- **Adult:** *The boy and the girl together make a…. a… a… a snow…* ***muñeco***. [Borrowing]

- **Adult:** *I don't know.* ***Ahora estoy peor que antes.*** [Code-switching]

- **Adult:** ***O puede ser****… Two?* [Code-mixing]

- **Child:** *And, how do you say* ***'van anciano'*** *('go grandfather')?* [Translation request]

Notes on data collection (L1 use)

Several subjects displayed L1 'automatic expressions' serving the function of acknowledgements, but they were not included in that category because they had not been carried out in the TL, as shown in the example (29) below:

(29) Student A: *The boy is left, but the father is left.*
Student B: *Yes, yes, yes,* ***ya.*** [Automatic expression]

- L1 structures

The present study uses the term 'structural transfer' to refer to instances of (mainly) Spanish – English cross-linguistic influence emerging from the data, i.e., underlying Spanish (or L2 Basque or French) morphology and syntax

features seeping through participants' output in English, as the following example demonstrates (30):

(30) Student A: (…) *and the girl is thinking* ***… what can … what can they put in snow… (…)***

[Structural transfer]

Student 'A's' production mirrors the Spanish word-order pattern, retaining the mandatory modal-subject inversion used in Spanish indirect and direct questions: *'(…) La chica está pensando qué pueden poner en la nieve (…)'*.

Again, due to the extension of the study, we will code and classify L1 structures under a single category, yet we provide the reader with a succinct bespoke classification which emerged from the data (below) so as to clarify the type of L1 use that we operationalized under the category "structural transfer". L1 structures were noticeable primarily via elisions of subjects and prepositions, use of double plurals and overgeneralizations, although other types of transfer were also spotted, as the following instances from the present study illustrate:

(i) Elision

a. Dummy subject elision

- *Are two…?*
- ***In one picture are*** *balloons black and the other red*

b. Preposition elision

- ***Putting the hat***

c. Subject elision

- ***Is jumping*** *in the bed?*

(ii) L1 Plural forms

a. Creation of 'double – plural' forms

- ***Childrens***

b. Plural forms in adjectives

- *Then ones balloons* ***blacks****?*

c. Plural forms in singular numeral determiners

- ***'Ones*** *balloons' ('some balloons')*

(iii) Overgeneralizations

a. Overgeneralization of *'boys'* for both genders *'children'*

- *The two* ***boys*** *(children) are… are… bored*

b. Overgeneralization of negation particle *'no'* as substitute for contracted forms

- *Here are two balloons* ***and here no***

c. Overgeneralization of possessive *'his'*

- *Two children and* ***his*** *(their) father*

(iv) Other types of transfer

a. Subject-adjective inversion

- ***Balloons black*** *and the other red*

b. Transfer of L1 prepositions

- *He is looking* ***for*** *the window* ***to*** *the rain*
- ***In*** *the floor*

c. Transfer of L1 syntax at phrase level

- *He is looking* ***for the window to the rain***
- *Playing* ***in the floor with the cat***

d. Transfer of L1 syntax in questions

- ***There are*** *two balloons flying?*

e. Word-for-word translations

- ***Balls of colours***
- *In a library* ***looking books***
- ***More long***

Notes on data collection (structural transfer)

1. Since the present study does not cover 'lexical transfer' as a separate category, single lexical items which might hint at transfer from the subjects' L1 have been coded as 'structural transfer', even if they do not constitute a whole structure or cluster by themselves, as the following example (31) shows:

(31) Student A: *There are two **boys** with his grandma playing with… playing… the… mm….*
[Structural transfer]

Student 'A's' choice *'boys'* reflects an overgeneralization of the Spanish term *'niños'* (English 'boys' or 'children'), which does not work in English for the task at hand, which included a girl and a boy.

2. The terms '*no'* used as a tag was also coded as L1 structural transfer, since its use did not substitute single a lexical item, but a structure, as in the following example (in which *'no'* substitutes for *'is he'?)*

(32) Student A: *The boy, erm… the boy isn't on the chair, **no?***
[Structural transfer]

Task tactics and success rate

The word 'tactics' will be used to refer to the personal strategies[15] employed by the participants acting as story builders during the tasks in order not to confuse them with 'conversational strategies'. Task tactics and success rate do not include D1T2, since subjects narrated the story in that task, and so it was down to the researcher to use his own tactics (which were equal in all cases) in order to carry out the activity successfully[16]. We believe this parameter will yield valuable insight regarding i) age-related cognitive

15 These have also been labelled differently in other studies on the subject, e.g., 'task-related strategies' (Pinter, 2006).
16 See comment in the 'limitations' section.

strategies, and also ii) NoC, i.e., 'stretches of information aimed at pushing the 'Narrator' to provide more information than initially offered in the description' (Van den Branden, 1997). Due to the nature and intricacy of this section of the study, no statistical analysis was made, and only percentages will be shown in order to provide readers with a more accessible qualitative approach.

In order to operationalize the tactics deployed and the success rate the following categorisation was made:

1. Solved

This category includes those cases in which the participant managed to place the right pictures in their corresponding place and order, leaving out the three distracters out on their first attempt. Since this information was somewhat incomplete, it was, in turn, subcategorised as follows:

1.1. With negotiation

'With negotiation' does not refer here to whether the participants negotiated for meaning as in the 'conversational adjustment' section, but to whether they inquired relevant information via meaningful questions in order to solve the puzzle. Thus, those questions having no effect whatsoever on distinguishing the right picture from the distracter one, or those just aiding in the differentiation of the order of the pictures were left aside. Consider example (33) as opposed to (34):

(33) Student A: ***Is the door open?***
Student B: *Yes.*

Student 'A' is asking a question which seems irrelevant in terms of task-solving opportunities, as we learn that the doors in the two pictures including them are wide open in both cases.

(34) Student B: *Erm…. there are two boys in… there is a girl and a boy… seeing the bad day that… is in that moment.*
Student A: ***Is the boy sad or… scared?***
Student B: *The boy is… sad and scared. More scared than sad.*
Student A: *The next, please.*

Student 'A' has noticed the difference between the pictures: the couple gazing out of the window seem intrigued. He then inquires using his own words in order to odd the wrong one out (successfully in this case).

Since every task contained three pictures which were mirrored, in turn, by three similar distracter pictures, the extent to which students addressed those differences was also analysed and coded. This detailed analysis provides information as to whether the different subjects left aside the wrong pictures because they actually looked for confirming evidence or, on the contrary, they followed their instinct or simply sorted out the story randomly. Therefore, as will be seen in the 'results' section all the participants falling within this category (in each task) performed relevant questions regarding at least one – but not necessarily all - of the distracter pictures.

The pictures including distracters, and, consequently, subject to be inquired about were the following:

Figure 5. Task numbers and distracters

TASK	D1T1	D1T2	D2T1	D2T2
ITEMS	3,4, 5	2,4, 5	1,2, 5	2,3, 5

1.2. Without negotiation

'Without negotiation' includes those subjects who managed to perform the task successfully on their first attempt in spite of their not carrying out any task-solving questions, i.e. those who succeeded fully haphazardly. In fact, subjects in this category made occasional use of non-task-solving negotiation, as the example below illustrates:

(35) Student A: *The… one boy and a, a girl are going with the father to the library, and the boy and the girl say that they have to go to the toyshop.*
Student B: *Erm… can you repeat?*
Student A: *A father and a… and two… children, they are going to the… shop and the… children say that they have to go to the toyshop.*
Student B: *Erm… in… are… the girl first or, or the boy first?*
Student A: *They are in the car.*
Student B: *Arm… ok. And what are doing in the car?*
Student A: *The, the children are saying that they have to go to the toyshop.*
Student B: *Ah, ok.*

Both students' interaction, while interesting in terms of the conversational adjustments used, did not include any relevant information regarding sorting the right pictures from their distracters, hence their inclusion in the present category.

2. Initially unsolved

This category includes subjects who did not manage to perform the task successfully on their first attempt. They are, in turn, subcategorised into 'with negotiation' and 'without negotiation', respectively.

2.1. With negotiation

'Initially unsolved with negotiation' refers to those subjects who did carry out task-solving negotiation initially, but who did not manage to sort the task successfully on their first attempt.

2.1.1. Re-checks

'Re-checks' refers to the number of times participants were told by the researcher that some of the items in their stories were wrong and, therefore, had to keep interacting, as shown in example (36):

(36) Student A: *Ah, with umbrella, vale.*
Student B: *Green, red and yellow.*
Student A: *Ok, sí, yes.*
Researcher: ***Ok, number one is correct now, but, (student's name): number five and number four are not correct.***

The researcher, upon seeing some of the pictures are wrongly placed, informs student 'A' (the story builder in this case) of her mistakes in order her to keep interacting with her partner.

2.1.2. Finally solved with negotiation

This parameters covers those participants who had failed to succeed in the task initially despite their task-solving tactics, but who eventually managed to perform the task successfully as a result of asking relevant task-solving questions to their interlocutors after 're-check(s)' were carried out by the researcher.

2.1.3. Finally solved without negotiation

This category comprises those subjects who, having failed to solve the task well on their first attempt in spite of having included task-solving tactics, eventually managed to perform the task successfully without asking relevant task-solving questions to their interlocutors after 're-check(s)' were carried out by the researcher, i.e. through elimination (discarding the items which the researcher said were wrong) or randomly.

2.2. Without negotiation

'Initially unsolved without negotiation' refers to those subjects who did not carry out task-solving negotiation initially and did not manage to sort the task successfully on their first attempt.

2.2.1. Re-checks

2.2.1 refers to the same concept as 2.1.1.

2.2.2. Finally solved with negotiation

This parameters includes those participants who had failed to succeed in the task initially without having carried out task-solving tactics, but who, after 're-check(s)' were carried out by the researcher, decided to ask relevant task-solving questions to their interlocutors and eventually managed to perform the task successfully.

2.2.3. Finally solved without negotiation

This parameters is made up of those participants who had failed to succeed in the task initially without carrying out task-solving tactics, and who, in spite of the 're-check(s)' were carried out by the researcher, still did not use relevant task-solving questions, but eventually managed to perform the task successfully via elimination (discarding the items which the researcher said were wrong) or haphazardly.

Additional features of interaction

Amount of production

The number of utterances produced will provide useful information as for the raw amount of language produced by participants in the different formats and tasks. While the quantity of language generated in a specific task does not necessarily imply a richer or more lacking discourse type, differences or commonalities between individual and paired OPIs at this level

and their possible correlations with the parameters analysed in the second research question might provide interesting insights as for the 'density' of the language-learning opportunities encountered by the participants.

Utterances like *'ok', 'yes', 'very well',* as well as unfinished sentences have also been computed, since they constitute *de facto* production of the speakers' part. Otherwise there would have been tasks coded with no subject output whatsoever:

(37) Researcher: *Ok. Picture four: the girls are now looking for the cat. They cannot seem to find it!*
Student A: ***Erm… Yes.***
Researcher: *Right?*
Student A: ***Yes.***

Duration

Duration for each task was recorded including the initial seconds devoted to instructions. This parameter will allow us to see whether the duration for all tasks was homogeneous or not (something which will provide insight as for the difficulty of the tasks themselves), as well as whether different interaction modes have an influence on on-task time. Finally, results will help position our children's output within the range of average durations in existing oral examinations for young learners (explained in 1.2.3. *Tasks in oral proficiency tests*), ranging from 2 to 10 minutes, approximately. Our study included transcriptions and coding of on-task interaction only, that is,

the researcher's greetings, introduction and additional questions were not computed and included in the data.

Turn-taking patterns

Number of turns will be turn-takes will be compared with previous studies (namely Pinter 2006), and children's results will also be checked against existing oral examinations at this level, namely Cambridge YL (Movers) and Trinity GESE Grade 2.

All the coded elements above mentioned can be more graphically seen in the following table:

Table 6. Elements of analysis (all)

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Common coded elements for RQ1 & RQ2</th><th>Additional coded elements for RQ2</th></tr>
<tr><th>NoM strategies</th><th>L1 influence</th><th>Task tactics and success rate</th><th>Additional features of interaction</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Conversational adjustments
•Overall results
•Clarification requests
•Confirmation checks
•Comprehension checks
•Acknowledgements

Repetition

Self-repetition
Other-repetition</td><td rowspan="2">• L1 use
• L1 structures</td><td rowspan="2">Solved
• With negotiation
• Without negotiation

Initially unsolved
With negotiation
• Re-checks
• Finally solved with negotiation
• Finally solved without negotiation

Without negotiation
• Re-checks
• Finally solved with negotiation
• Finally solved without negotiation</td><td rowspan="2">• Amount of production
• Duration
• Turn-taking patterns</td></tr>
</table>

Chapter 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter the results from this study are presented and discussed. We have opted to merge the results and discussion into the same chapter because we believe that it will facilitate readers' understanding given the great variety of variables involved. For each category, a discussion including the outcome to the hypotheses entertained in 2.2 will be provided. Again, it is important to highlight that there were common elements of the data which will serve to provide an answer to part of each research question.

The chapter is divided into two sections. In the first section (Section 3.1.), we answer the first research question, related to the features of our leaners' interactions. As we are particularly interested in the differences and similarities between the two age groups under similar circumstances, we present the analysis of our participants' interactional features as follows:

a. Children vs. adults in peer interaction: child-child vs. adult-adult

b. Children vs. adult in interaction with an expert: child-expert vs. adult-expert

In the second section (Section 3.2), we answer the second research question, which addresses the validity of paired interaction for the assessment of oral proficiency at beginner levels of the CEFR, more specifically, at the

A1 level (the level all our participants share). This validity is explored in contrast with the learner-examiner mode (individual interview), which is the most common type at low levels of proficiency in official examinations worldwide. Therefore, we present our results in order to compare learner-learner (paired interaction) vs. learner-expert (individual interview) pairings. This means that for both, the children and adult group, we examine their interaction with their age and level-matched peers in contrast with their interaction with the researcher (adult expert speaker). This is summarized below:

a. Children group: child-child (paired OPT) vs. child-expert (individual OPT)

b. Adult group: adult-adult (paired OPT) vs. adult-expert (individual OPT)

The following Tables summarize the specific elements that have been analyzed in order to answer the research questions.

Table 7. Features of Interaction: Elements of analysis (RQ1)

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">RQ1</th></tr>
<tr><th>NoM strategies</th><th>L1 Influence</th><th>Task tactics and success rate</th></tr>
<tr><td>Conversational adjustments
•Overall results
•Clarification requests
•Confirmation checks
•Comprehension checks
•Acknowledgements</td><td rowspan="2">• L1 use
• L1 structures</td><td rowspan="2">Solved
• With negotiation
• Without negotiation

Initially unsolved
With negotiation
• Re-checks
• Finally solved with negotiation
• Finally solved without negotiation

Without negotiation
• Re-checks
• Finally solved with negotiation
• Finally solved without negotiation</td></tr>
<tr><td>Repetition

Self-repetition
Other-repetition</td></tr>
</table>

Table 8. Validity of paired interaction for oral assessment at A1 levels: Elements of analysis (RQ2)

Common coded elements for RQ1 & RQ2			**Additional coded elements for RQ2**
NoM strategies	**L1 Influence**	**Task tactics and success rate**	**Additional features of interaction**
Conversational adjustments •*Overall results* •*Clarification requests* •*Confirmation checks* •*Comprehension checks* •*Acknowledgements* ***Repetition*** ***Self-repetition*** ***Other-repetition***	• *L1 use* • *L1 structures*	***Solved*** • *With negotiation* • *Without negotiation* ***Initially unsolved*** ***With negotiation*** • *Re-checks* • *Finally solved with negotiation* • *Finally solved without negotiation* ***Without negotiation*** • *Re-checks* • *Finally solved with negotiation* • *Finally solved without negotiation*	• *Amount of production* • *Duration* • *Turn-taking patterns*

Because time on task varied and the number of subjects was different (20 children and 14 adults), analyses of the test transcript data are reported as percentages rather than frequencies. These were calculated dividing the raw data in each parameter by the number of utterances produced. Such raw data may be checked at further length in Appendix G.

3.1.FEATURES OF INTERACTION

The results in the present section will analyse the commonalities and differences of children and adult interactions in their different modalities via the coding scheme and combination layout presented above (and now repeated below for clarity):

1. CHILDREN / ADULTS
    a. CHILD-CHILD / ADULT-ADULT
    b. CHILD-EXPERT/ ADULT-EXPERT

For all statistical analyses in this section we resorted to the Mann-Whitney U-test (a non- parametric equivalent of the Student's t-test). Significance level was fixed at $p = 0.05$. Statistically significant differences are marked in bold. Star icons are used to indicate statistical significance.

In Section 3.1.1. the results for NoM strategies are presented. Section 3.1.2. comprises the results for L1 influence. Although the L1 can also be considered a NoM strategy, its specificity has led us to devote a separate section for its discussion. Finally, section 3.1.3. presents the results for students' tactics and success rates.

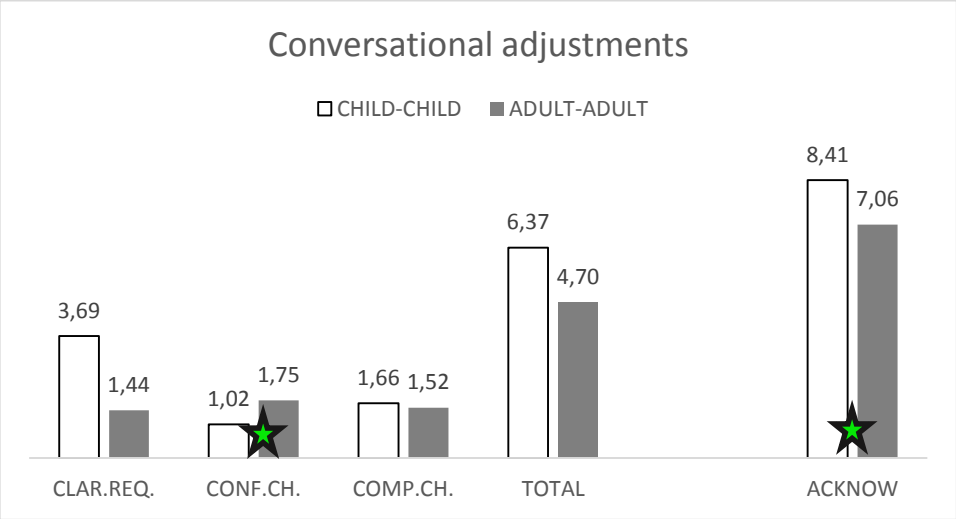
3.1.1. NoM strategies

In this section we will first present the results and briefly interpret them (3.1.1.1). They will subsequently be discussed in greater depth in relation to the research questions and hypotheses formulated in this Thesis (3.1.1.2).

3.1.1.1.Results: NoM strategies

First, we will present the results regarding conversational adjustments. In the following figure we present these results comparing child-child (D2T1, D2T2) and adult-adult (D2T1, D2T2) interaction:

Figure 6. Child-child / Adult-adult: conversational adjustments



As can be seen in Figure 6, NoM strategies including instances of all conversational adjustments were present in both groups. Children used more conversational adjustments than adults did, yet differences were not statistically significant (u= 87,500, p= 0,066 [b]).

When looking at the different strategies separately, children used more clarification requests than adults did, yet differences are not statistically significant (u= 131,500, p = 0,769 [b]). By contrast, adult-adult interaction yielded a statistically significantly higher proportion of confirmation checks

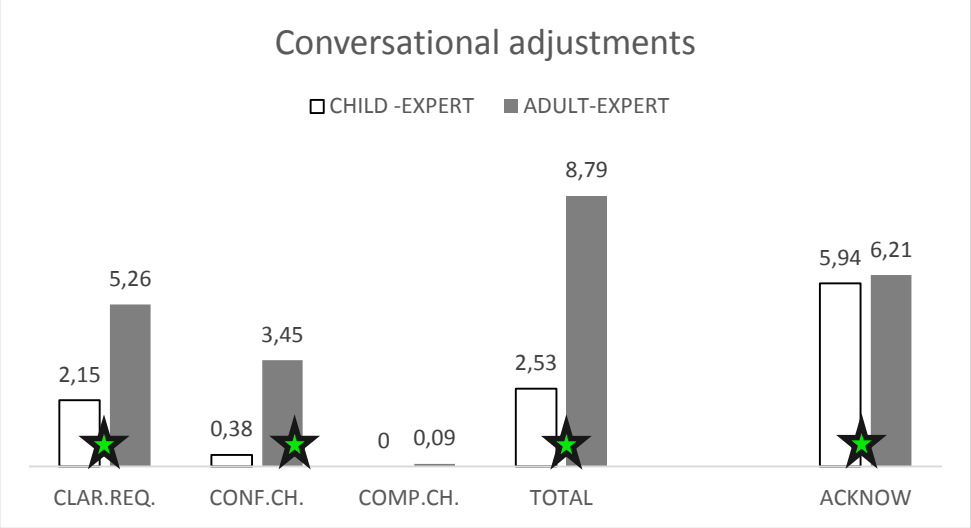
(u= 66,000, p = 0,009 [b]) while child-child interaction provided significantly more instances of acknowledgements than adult-adult interaction did: u= 50,000, p = 0,001[b]). Finally, both groups produced a remarkably similar percentage of comprehension checks (u= 113,000, p = 0,359 [b]).

In summary, in terms of conversational adjustments, child-child and adult-adult interactions are similar in that they both display instances of all categories, and their overall numbers are not significantly different. In addition, the use of acknowledgements was noticeably higher than any other strategy in both groups. In our view, acknowledgements might make comprehension checks redundant and vice versa: the higher the number of acknowledgements within a couple, the lower the use of comprehension checks.

On the other hand, there are several differences between both age groups. Children negotiated more with their peers than adults did. This might have to do with pedagogical practice: being more used to peer-peer interaction than adult speakers, who might be exposed to a more formal teacher-fronted classroom. However, this is only speculation and further research would be needed to explore this possibility.

Next, we present the distribution of conversational adjustments comparing the interactions of i) children with an expert and ii) adults with the same expert (children D1T1 and D1T2 vs adults D1T1 and D1T2):

Figure 7. Child-expert/ Adult-expert: conversational adjustments



As can be seen in Figure 7, adult-expert interaction consistently generates more instances of each conversational adjustment than does child-expert interaction, displaying a clear correlation between both groups in each parameter. Again, acknowledgements were the most frequently used conversational adjustment. Overall statistical differences were significant (u= 16,500, p = < .001 [b]).

When looking at each strategy, adults more than double the percentage of clarification requests, differences being significant (u= 25,500 p < .001 [b]), and used significantly more (nearly ten times as many) confirmation checks than children did (u= 39,000, p < .001 [b]). Regarding comprehension checks, values were extremely low, amounting to nought in the case of children. Hence the lack of statistical differences (u= 130,000, p = 0,743 [b]). As for the acknowledgement use, as mentioned above, high percentages were found in

both groups. Adult-expert interaction generated a significantly higher number of acknowledgements than did children-expert (u= 77,500, p = 0,027 [b]).

Thus, the main common aspect for both age groups lies in a low rate of comprehension check use in both populations, and percentage differences were sustained across the different conversational features. It seems perfectly cogent that this might be so as a result of their assuming that their proficient-speaking counterpart on D1T1 and D1T2 understood most – if not all – of their output, and might have relied on him for any possible communication breakdowns. If this interpretation proves true, it would have considerable implications for test design, since individual OPIs might be hindering NoM at this level.

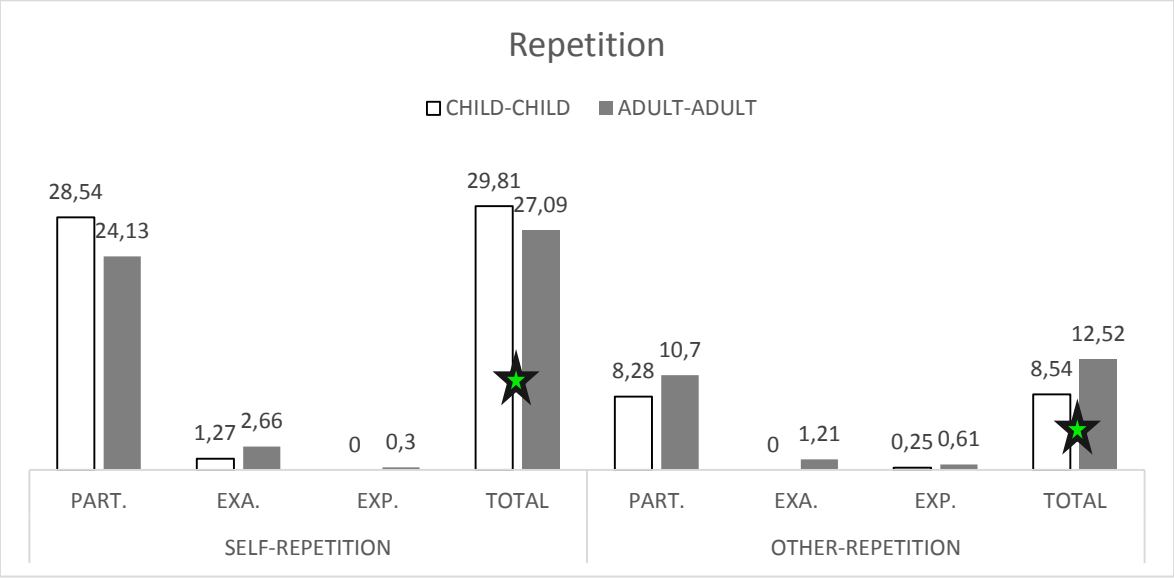
As was the case in the peer interactions, interactions with an expert in both age groups displayed a noticeably higher use of acknowledgements than any other strategy. Again, the use of acknowledgements might make comprehension checks redundant and vice versa: the higher the number of acknowledgements within a couple, the lower the use of comprehension checks.

On the whole adults negotiate significantly more than children when interacting when an expert; the latter, by contrast, might have taken on a more submissive role, thus triggering fewer instances of conversational adjustments. Children might have been more sensitive to their interlocutor's different status and might have relied on him to carry the weight of the

conversation in this respect, unlike adults, who might have been more used to interacting with partners their own age.

Once the distribution of interactional strategies has been presented for both age groups in both pairing types we proceed to do the same with their use of repetitions. The following values compare repetition rates in child-child with adult-adult interaction (children D2T1 and D2T2 vs adults D2T1 and D2T2). Although a subcategorization is provided in the bar diagram (following Oliver (2002)) for the readers' interest, only overall values have been analysed statistically for the sake of clarity:

Figure 8. Child-child / Adult-adult: repetitions



As Figure 8 shows, child-child interaction yielded a significantly higher rate of instances of self-repetition (u= 49,000, p = 0,001 [b]). The rate of other-

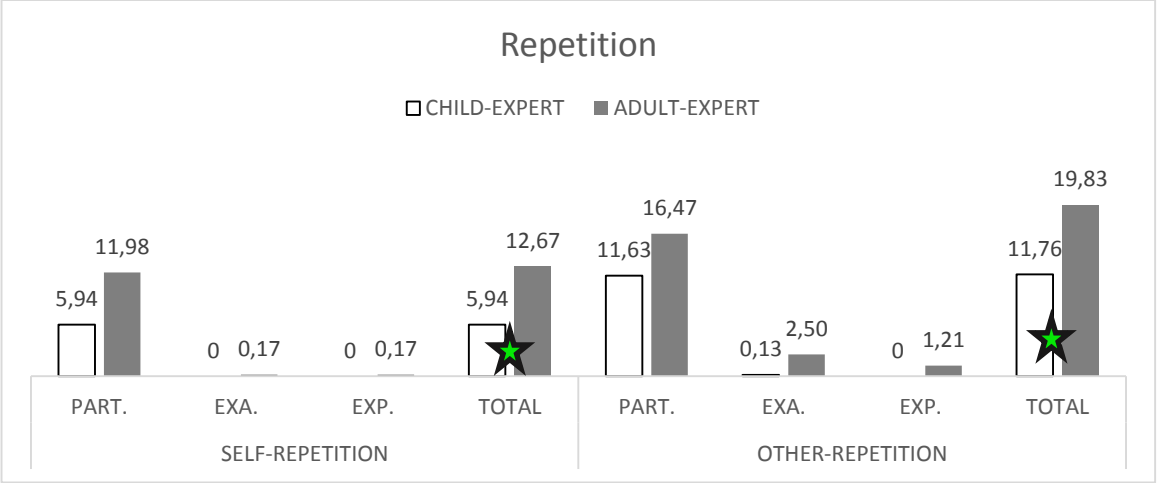
repetition observed in adult-adult interaction, however, is significantly higher than that in child-child interaction ($u = 37{,}500$, $p < .001$ [b]).

When looking at the literature, repetition rates in both groups ('self' or 'other') are in stark contrast with previous EFL studies on children interaction (e.g., Azkarai & Imaz Agirre, 2015; Lázaro-Ibarrola & Azpilicueta-Martínez, 2015), being significantly higher than results in those studies. As the populations in these studies are also based on Spanish children at low levels of proficiency, this difference might be hinting at a clear task-related effect. When trying to identify subtle differences in the pictures that are needed to build the story, repeating might be more necessary than in other task-types.

Finally, we would like to highlight the differences between self and other repetition in both age groups. Children self-repeated significantly more than adults when interacting with their peers, although the latter also did so to a high extent. By contrast, adult-adult interaction generated significantly more instances of other-repetition than did child-child interaction. This difference, in our view, seems to be suggesting that children do not clearly feel that repeating their peers' production is a good strategy, that is, they do not trust their peers as a positive source of input as much as adults do. This suggestion will be now completed with the results obtained from the comparison of child-expert and adult-expert interactions.

The following values comprise results comparing the repetitions of i) children with an expert and ii) adults with the same expert (children D1T1 and D1T2 vs adults D1T1 and D1T2):

Figure 9. Child-expert / Adult-expert: repetitions



As illustrated in Figure 9, adult-expert interaction produced significantly more instances of self-repetition than did the interaction involving a child and an expert (u= 39,500, p < .001[b]). In the same way, adult-expert interaction produced significantly more instances of other-repetition than did the interaction involving a child and an expert (u= 5,000, p < .001 [b]).

When comparing these results with the results obtained from peer interactions (Figure 8), it is very interesting to note that, although the percentage of overall repetition is still higher than those in EFL children studies on interaction, both groups have inverted their proportion, i.e., produce less self-repetition and more other-repetition. This shows that

learners, adults and children, are very aware of the validity of the input provided by the expert and feel very confident that repeating what the expert said is a good strategy while they are not so confident about repeating the input provided by their peers, particularly in the case of children. In any case, the abundant repetitions, –be it with children or adults - suggests the presence of an imitative pattern, that is, "word-for-word repetition of all or part of someone else's utterance" (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 10).

If we focus on the specific differences between the age groups, adult-expert interaction always involved significantly more repetition in both modes, and instances of all subtypes were found. Children-expert interaction was consistently lower and certain types of subtypes (exact and expanded) were barely –if at all- visible. This might also be related to the degree of language creativity displayed, i.e., adults being less spontaneous or creative on language and repeating their own – or, especially their expert interlocutor's – speech more, while children might be doing so to a lesser extent.

3.1.1.2.Discussion of hypotheses: NoM strategies

Once we have presented all the results regarding NoM strategies, we will discuss them in relation to the original hypotheses entertained in section 2.2.

Hypotheses regarding NoM strategies:

It was expected that:

iv. Both children and adults would manage to negotiate for meaning in order to understand each other and complete the task successfully.

This hypothesis was supported. Both populations were able to negotiate for meaning in both interactive modes. The main commonalities found between both groups were:

- Regarding the use of conversational adjustments, comprehension checks nearly always provided the lowest values across groups and interactive modes; this might be linked to i) a higher use of acknowledgements, as explained above, and ii) their limited FL mental processing (in addition to an egocentric nature, in the case of children), hindering, at this beginner level, their capacity to monitor their own speech while checking comprehension of their interlocutors' progress.
- Repetition values were noticeably higher than those reported in previous EFL studies, and both groups coincided in self-repeating more in the peer-peer mode, while imitating their interlocutor's speech (other-repetition) when interacting with an expert.
- Acknowledgements were always the single most resorted to conversational adjustment in both groups, something which appears

to be related to the low rate of comprehension checks displayed. In other words, the higher the number of acknowledgements within a couple, the lower the use of comprehension checks produced. This was a common feature in both groups.

Likewise, there are clear significant differences regarding NoM strategies between both populations on most parameters in both interactive modes. Significantly higher rates were spotted on either group (children or adults) when they interacted with peers. However, when their interactions took place with an expert, then adults always (with the exception of comprehension checks, in which case differences were also higher, but not significant) significantly exceeded the percentage of NoM strategies produced by children.

In other words, interaction with an expert widens the breach between children and adults in terms of NoM strategy use in favour of the latter, as may be noted in the tables below:

Table 9. Child-child / Adult-adult interactions. NoM strategies

CHILD-CHILD / ADULT-ADULT INTERACTIONS		
STATISTICAL DIFFERENCE (Mann-Whitney U-test)	**SIGNIFICANT**	**NON-SIGNIFICANT**
Conversational adjustments		u= 87,500 p = 0,066 [b]
Clarification requests		u= 131,500 p = 0,769 [b]
Confirmation checks	**u= 66,000 p = 0,009** [b] (higher in adult-adult)	
Comprehension checks		u= 113,000 p = 0,359 [b]
Acknowledgements	**u= 50,000 p = 0,001** [b] (higher in child-child)	
Self-repetition	**u= 49,000 p = 0,001** [b] (higher in child-child)	
Other-repetition	**u= 37,500 p < .001** [b] (higher in adult-adult)	

Table 10. Child-expert / Adult-expert interactions. NoM strategies

CHILD-EXPERT / ADULT-EXPERT INTERACTIONS		
STATISTICAL DIFFERENCE (Mann-Whitney U-test)	**SIGNIFICANT**	**NON-SIGNIFICANT**
Conversational adjustments	**u= 16,500 p < .001** [b] (higher in adult-expert)	
Clarification requests	**u= 25,500 p < .001** [b] (higher in adult-expert)	
Confirmation checks	**u= 39,000 p < .001** [b] (higher in adult-expert)	
Comprehension checks		u= 130,000 p = 0,743 [b]
Acknowledgements	**u= 77,500 p = 0,027** [b] (higher in adult-expert)	
Self-repetition	**u= 39,500 p < .001** [b] (higher in adult-expert)	
Other-repetition	**u= 5,000 p < .001** [b] (higher in adult-expert)	

Consequently, the findings in this section reveal that, at A1 of the CEFR, both children and adults benefit from suitable interactive activities and appear to have gone past the minimum 'access point' below which negotiation for meaning appeared to be compromised (Lázaro-Ibarrola & Azpilicueta-Martínez, 2015).

Therefore, our low-level participants seem to resort to NoM due to their facing greater difficulties to understand each other, in line with studies by Gass and Varonis (1985a.) and Oliver (2002).

In conclusion, our results concur with research findings on ESL /EFL low-level task-based interaction with children and adults (e.g., M.P. García Mayo & A. Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2015; Lázaro-Ibarrola & Hidalgo, 2017; Oliver, 2000a; Oliver, 2002) and show beginner students' ability to perform suitable interactive tasks with their peers successfully.

v. Children would make a less abundant use of certain NoM strategies; it was predicted that

    a. Children would provide significantly fewer instances of comprehension checks than adults.

This hypothesis was not supported, since statistical differences regarding comprehension checks were never significant and figures remained consistently low in both populations. Studies by Oliver (1998, 2000) had reported significant differences between both populations, i.e., children's

lower proportional use of NoM strategies, particularly comprehension checks (Oliver 1998, 2000). While Oliver had related her findings to a developmental effect by which children seemed to focus on their own output more readily than on their interlocutor's, in our study such gap was present when either population interacted with an expert, in which case adults did negotiate significantly more than children.

Consequently, in addition to Oliver's cognitive developmental reference, a low L2 proficiency common to both groups appears to be constraining the students' ability to take their interlocutor's output on board.

b. Children would produce lower clarification requests and repetition rates.

Regarding clarification requests, this hypothesis was partly supported, since the only significant difference lied in adults producing a higher rate when interacting with an expert. By contrast, values in peer-peer interaction were higher in the case of children, although not significantly.

As a result, and, although values remained low, our findings do not support those by Carpenter et al. (1995) with English-speaking children learning Japanese, since theirs had referred to a conspicuous lack of clarification requests in their data (Carpenter et al., 1995, p. 172).

In respect of repetitions, the hypothesis was mostly supported. Results in a study by Pinter (2006, p. 620) had reported adults producing higher levels of repetition than children when performing the same task. Those were in line with other findings supporting lower rates of negotiation in children than in adult learners.

On the one hand, adult-adult interaction generated significantly more instances of other-repetition than did child-child interaction. In addition, adult-expert interaction always involved significantly more repetition in both modes, and instances of all subtypes were found. Children-expert interaction was consistently lower and certain types of subtypes (exact and expanded) were barely –if at all- visible.

By contrast, children self-repeated significantly more than adults when interacting with their peers, although the latter also did so to a high extent. We believe this might be related to the degree of language creativity displayed, i.e., adults being less spontaneous or creative with language and repeating their own – or, especially their expert interlocutor's – speech more, while children might be doing so to a lesser extent.

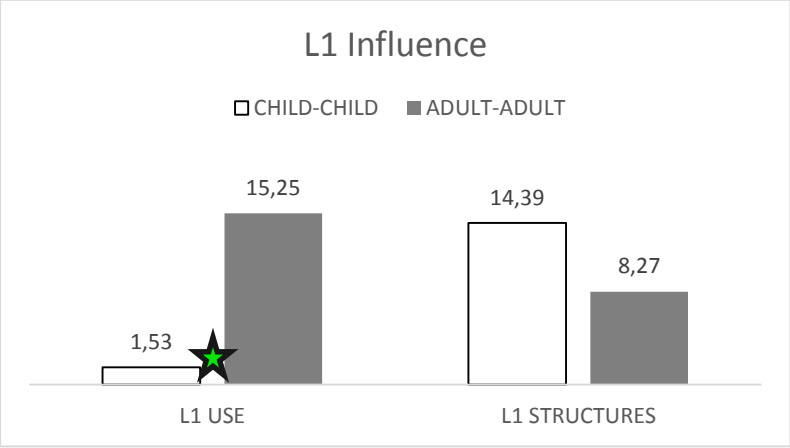
3.1.2. L1 influence

In line with the previous section, we will start by presenting and briefly discussing the results obtained for L1 in both age groups and in both pairing types (3.1.2.1). Then, we will summarize the results and discuss them in greater depth in connection to the research questions and hypotheses of the present Thesis (3.1.2.2).

3.1.2.1.Results: L1 influence

The following figure shows results comparing L1 influence in child-child interaction with rates in adult-adult exchanges (children D2T1 and D2T2 vs adults D2T1 and D2T2):

Figure 10. Child-child / Adult-adult: L1 influence



As observed in Figure 10, the output of child-child interaction yielded significantly fewer L1 explicit terms than adults did (u= 33,500, p < .001 [b]).

On the other hand, instances of an underlying L1 morphosyntax were highly noticeable in both groups. Interestingly, while child-child interaction involved a higher percentage, differences were not statistically significant (u= 99,000, p = 0,158 [b]).

As regards similarities across groups, both of them displayed a high percentage of L1 structures permeating their English output. This appears to be a common features in learners at this stage. While this could seem to 'surface' as a compensatory 'trade-off' for the children's apparent avoidance of explicit L1 use, adult-adult interaction (which includes significantly more L1 terms) ends up producing English with Spanish-L1 structures to a similar extent.

Interestingly, results in this parameter clash with those found in Pinter (2006), since, in her study, adult-adult interaction produced significantly fewer instances of L1 terms (3%) than did child-child interaction (15% in Pinter's). Participants in adult-adult interaction appear to struggle to produce L1-free (or adults simply do not mind producing them altogether) utterances in their English output.

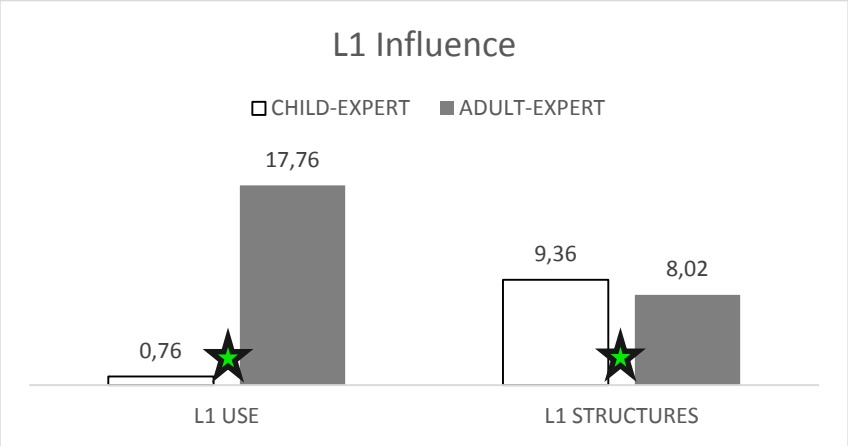
Likewise, child-child interaction displaying such an extremely low number of L1 explicit terms supports findings in studies by M.P. García Mayo and A. Lázaro-Ibarrola (2015) (3rd graders CLIL) and Lázaro-Ibarrola and Azpilicueta-Martínez (2015), and clashes with findings in the majority of

similar EFL –based research on children interaction (e.g., Lázaro-Ibarrola & Hidalgo, 2017), whose results regarding L1 use were always higher.

It seems factors such as teaching practices, e.g., children being rewarded for their speaking fully in English, might have played a role in this respect.

If we focus on the L1 influence of i) children-expert interactions and ii) adults interacting with the same expert (children D1T1 and D1T2 vs adults D1T1 and D1T2) the results were the following:

Figure 11. Child-expert / Adult-expert: L1 influence



As may be noted in Figure 11, adult-expert interaction included significantly more explicit L1 terms than did child-expert (u= 0,000, p < .001 [b]), results in the latter being practically nonexistent. Likewise, although the diagram might suggest otherwise, the amount of L1 structuring present in child-expert

interactions proved to be significantly higher than that in adult-expert interactions (u= 62,000, p = 0,006 [b]).

As a whole, it may be said that both groups included a high percentage of L1-permeated utterances in their output. Again, this appears to be a common feature at this stage.

By contrast, adults explicitly resort to their L1 significantly more than children when interacting with an expert. While the adults in the present study knew that the expert could speak their own L1, the children did not, and this might have played a role in this respect, in addition to specific teaching practices, contexts and motivations.

The blatant absence of explicit L1 terms in the children's production might seem to lead to less conscious-yet equally present- forms of permeation in their English output.

3.1.2.2.Discussion of hypotheses: L1 influence

Hypothesis regarding L1 Influence:

Due to mixed findings in previous L1 research regarding adults and children,

i. No clear predictions were made as to the rates of explicit L1 words to be generated in each group.

Previous studies had reported low-proficiency students in FL classrooms resorting to their L1 instead of using the TL (Alegría de la Colina & García Mayo, 2009; DiCamilla & Antón, 2012; Tognini & Oliver, 2012). In this respect, Pinter's work (2006) reported a significantly higher proportion of children speakers' turns containing explicit L1 terms: 15% (children) as opposed to 3% (adults). However, more recent findings by Lázaro-Ibarrola and Azpilicueta-Martínez (2015) on Spanish EFL children with a very low command of the TL showed an extremely low rate of explicit L1 terms (0.52%).

While the adult group in the present study did reach significant rates of explicit L1 use, children's L1 terms were almost inexistent, supporting children results by Lázaro-Ibarrola and Azpilicueta-Martínez (2015). It is important to highlight, nevertheless, the extreme variability in L1 explicit use among adults: some individuals hardly ever produced L1 terms at all, while other individuals produced significant numbers regardless of the interlocutor.

There was a noticeable degree of L1 structures seeping through the participants' English output at all times. In the case of children, such structures were much more frequent than the percentage of explicit L1 terms. Conversely, adults consistently produced more explicit L1 terms than did L1 structures, and differences between both populations were always significant, with the exception of the L1-structure rate in the peer-interaction mode.

This might lead to several explanations: it appears as though the fewer the explicit number of L1 words, the more compromised the TL output might be in structural terms at this level. Likewise, adults seem to be monitoring their output more, thus producing more TL-like utterances, at the expense of having to resort to their L1 when they do not find the exact word(s) they need.

Table 11. Child-child / Adult-adult interactions. L1 influence

CHILD-CHILD / ADULT-ADULT INTERACTIONS		
STATISTICAL DIFFERENCE (Mann-Whitney U-test)	**SIGNIFICANT**	**NON-SIGNIFICANT**
L1 use	**u= 33,500 *p* < .001** [b] (higher in adult-adult)	
L1 structures		u= 99,000 *p* = 0,158 [b]

Table 12. Child-expert / Adult-expert interactions. L1 influence

CHILD-EXPERT / ADULT-EXPERT INTERACTIONS		
STATISTICAL DIFFERENCE (Mann-Whitney U-test)	**SIGNIFICANT**	**NON-SIGNIFICANT**
L1 use	**u= 0,000 *p* < .001** [b] (higher in adult-expert)	
L1 structures	**u= 62,000 *p* = 0,006** [b] (higher in children-expert)	

Curiously, the adults were the only group which included explicit L2 terms, i.e., words in French or Basque, in their discourse. This fact is revealing in that might be hinting at their accessing English via the existing L2, unlike the

children in the study, some of whom also spoke various languages. This is visible in the following example:

(40) Student B: *Erm? I ask you for the picture. In the, in the car, in the car are the father, and* ***deux*** *chidren, but, there are other, erm…* ***élément, élément*** *in the car? The o…? On the car? In the picture?*
Student A: *Ah…*
Student B: *In the car only are three person or there are other* ***élément****? Other…?*

In the example above both speakers shared French as an L2. The adults in the example above reported not having been aware of the fact they were borrowing terms from French.

(41) Student B: ***Vale*** (Eng. *'ok'*) , *and…* ***jarri*** (Basque *'to'*) *erm… and write, erm… up the children*?
Student A: *No,* ***il*** (French *'he'*). *Erm, erm…* ***il****! El francés…* ('My French…'). *They think erm… erm… in the… in the toyshop too.*

Note how, in two consecutive turns the students are including Spanish, Basque and French terms in their interaction.

3.1.3. Task tactics and success rate

It is worth pointing out that this section of the study includes results shown in percentages, since no statistical analyses were made with the aim of providing readers with a more operative qualitative approach. By contrast,

additional information and diagrams including children / adult overall results will also be provided so as to aid readers visualise the results more clearly. Finally, it is important to remind the reader that the two different roles that the learners adopt in the task: narrators, when they narrate the stories, and story builders, when they listen to the narrator and need to choose the pictures and build the story, will now be relevant when discussing some aspects.

As in previous sections, we will first present the results (3.1.3.1) and then summarize them and discuss them in relation to the hypotheses (3.1.3.2).

3.1.3.1.Results: Task tactics and success rate

In Figure 12, we show the task-solving tactics and success rates reached in child-child and adult-adult interaction (children D2T1 and D2T2 vs adults D2T1 and D2T2):

Figure 12. Child-child / Adult-adult interactions. Task-tactics and success rate

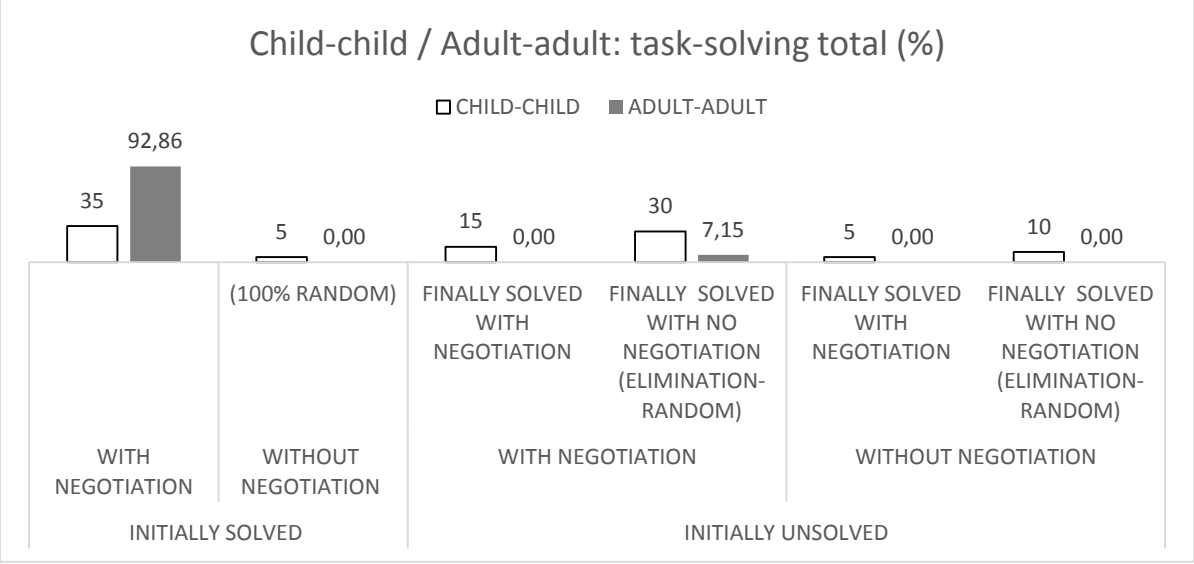


Figure 12 clearly illustrates important differences between both groups in favour of the adult students. Nevertheless, the largest percentage in both groups ended up solving the task successfully via meaningful task-orientated strategy use. If they did not manage to fully do so, a second largest percentage in both groups simply resorted to placing the alternative picture (without needing to negotiate any further) and simply got the task right on their 'second attempt'.

As mentioned above, adult-adult interactions clearly outperform children in this parameter. Nearly all adults 'got the hang out' of the task and understood the importance of finding out the difference via more careful questioning, checking and recapping in order to obtain reliable information. They also tended to keep a tally of their differences, and a mental 'record' of what their interlocutors told them. As in Pinter (2006), adults were generally more structured and systematic in their approach. While there is a small percentage (15%) of children who did not carry out any sort of task-related strategy, there were no adults doing so in this interaction mode.

It seems obvious that data regarding task tactics was mostly gathered from their role as story-builders (D1T1-all, plus D2T1 or D2T2), since participants acting as narrators did not really need to enquire about the pictures. However some adults tended to be more symmetrical in their co-construction of the task (this was less almost unheard of amongst children):

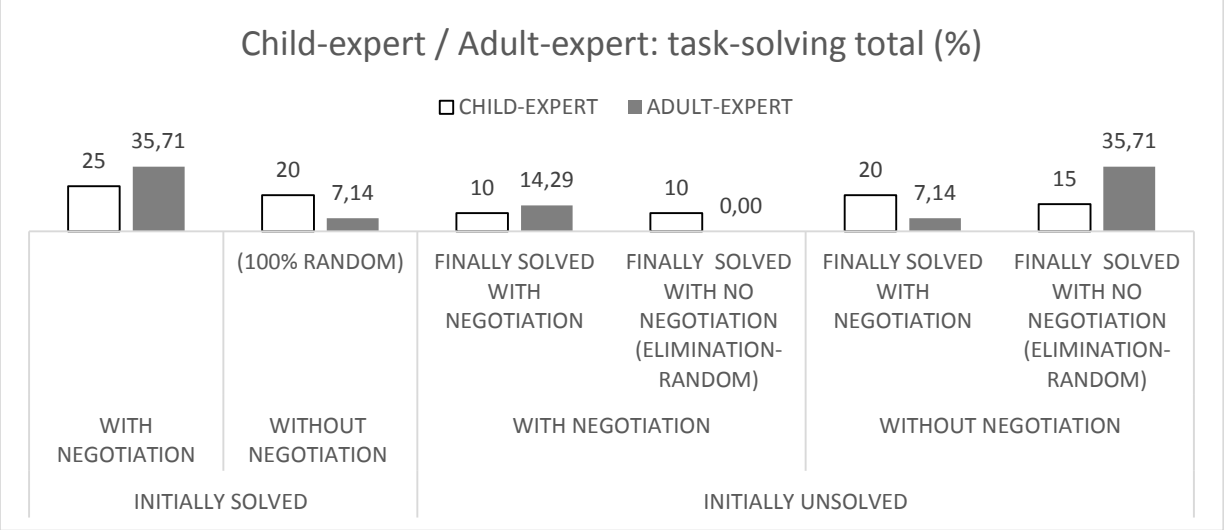
(42) 1.- Narrator: *Mmmm… and finish, erm… the boy and the girl, erm… are…. Mmmm… are perfect for the raining (pron. 'rah –inning'), the rain (pron. 'rah – inn') and it's sunny.*
2.- Story builder: *I have two pictures, and they are very similar. I don't see…* ***I cannot see the different.***
3.- Narrator: *The boy had a… a… (long pause) umbrella. Umbrella with three colours: green, yellow and red.* ***Is this the different?***
4.- Storybuilder: *No.*

(Adult-adult)

Note the narrator's awareness (turn 3) of what his partner has just said and how he attempts (unsuccessfully) to pinpoint the difference in order to succeed and progress in the task. This type of behaviour was hardly ever displayed in children.

Next, we present the results that comprise task-solving tactics in i) children-expert interactions and ii) adults interacting with the same expert (children and adults D1T1) (Figure 13); it is important to bear this in mind because, unlike all other parameters, this entails only one (not two) task at hand. This is so because on D1T2 all subjects acted as narrators, and it was the expert (researcher) who had to take on the story-builder role:

Figure 13. Child-expert / Adult-expert interactions. Task-tactics and success rate



As can be seen in Figure 13, the highest percentages of participants in both groups were the ones performing the task successfully while displaying task-solving tactics right from the start. Likewise, a high number of students (35%-children; 42,85%-adults) performed their first 'story-builder' role without carrying out any task-orientated tactics. This might be down to factors such as i) the interlocutor variable – perceiving they are getting reliable information from the expert and feeling embarrassed to ask / show they did not understand, ii) assuming that it was a game in which asking entailed some form of 'cheating' or simply doing it for the first time and failing to fully understand the mechanics of the game.

Interestingly, a significant number of adults (35,71%) did not carry out any form of task-solving tactics at this stage, unlike children's 15%.

However, adults also include a higher proportion of participants succeeding in the task via task-solving tactic use on their first attempt (again 35,71%, as opposed to the children's 25%. Consequently, adults appear to be less evenly distributed, with the most significant percentages placed at the opposite end of the spectrum, while children show lower, more similar percentages across the whole range.

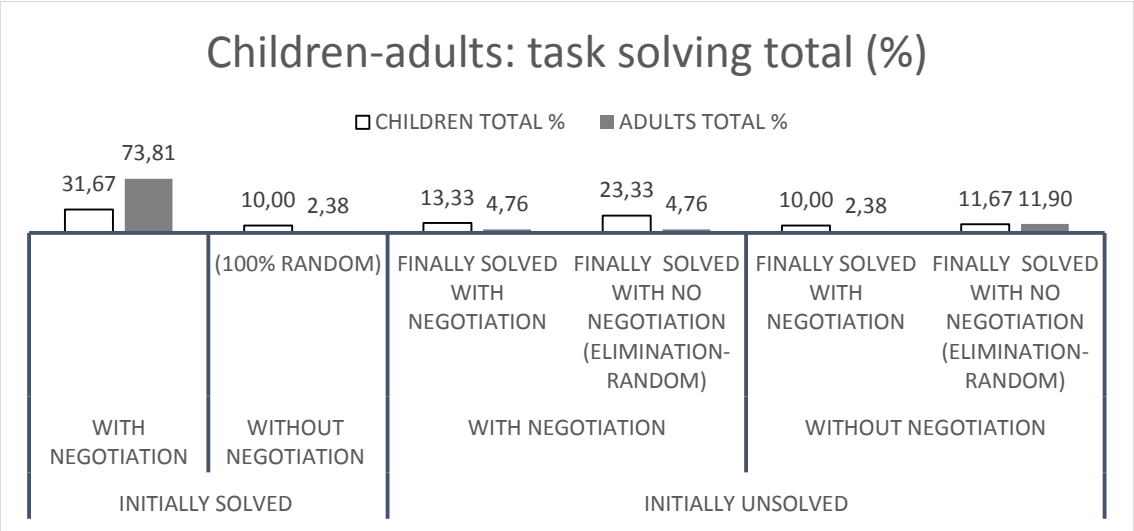
3.1.3.2.Discussion of hypotheses: Task tactics and success rate

Hypothesis regarding Task Tactics and Success Rate:

i. Adults were expected to perform the tasks at hand more efficiently than children, and to achieve a higher success rate through the use of specific task-solving tactics.

This hypothesis was supported, since adults performed the tasks much more satisfactorily than children in terms of carrying out task-accomplishment-oriented interaction. Overall performances (comprising peer interaction and interaction with an expert) by both populations are collected in Figure 14.

Figure 14. Children / adults: Task-tactics and success rate



As observed in the Figure above, when adults interacted meaningfully, i.e., did so in order to guess correctly, they tended to perform the task successfully on their first attempt (73,81%), whereas children do not even reach half that percentage (31,67%). These findings are in line with Pinter's (2006), since, in her study, adults consistently outperformed children in task-related strategies.

On the whole, the percentage of students who carried out task-accomplishment interaction at some point is 55% (children) and 80,95% (adults).

The percentage of students not solving the task on their first try (i.e. initially unsolved) was 58,33% in the case of children, who were broken down into 23,33% of children who kept carrying out task-accomplishment interaction, while 35% decided to stop negotiating and succeeded in the task via other strategies (opting for the remaining picture if they were in doubt in

most cases or guessing correctly at random). 10% of children managed to perform the task without any sort of task-accomplishment interaction whatsoever.

In the case of adults, the percentage of participants unable to resolve the task on the first attempt was 23,81%, broken down into 4,76% who kept carrying out task-accomplishment interaction, while 16,66% decided to stop negotiating and succeeded in the task via other strategies (opting for the remaining picture if they were in doubt in most cases, or guessing correctly at random). 11,90% of adults managed to perform the task without carrying out any task-accomplishment orientated interaction.

It seems that there is a minimum percentage of subjects in both groups who did not carry out task-accomplishment interaction in spite of making mistakes and being informed that their answers were wrong; this percentage is remarkably similar: (11,67% in the case of children and 11,90% of the adults taking part). This might have to do with their not *understanding* the need to ask meaningful questions, as well as additional factors impinging on their performance, e.g., personality traits or mood at that time, viewing the game as a 'gamble' (in line with findings in Lázaro-Ibarrola and Azpilicueta-Martínez (2015)) , or even trying to 'beat' their partner in order to be quicker, to name but some.

Regarding progress along the tasks, both children and adults experienced a dramatic increase in their capacity to carry out successful task-

orientated interaction. Children went up from 25% to 50%, while adults did so from 35% to a staggering 100%. While 55% of children did not carry out task-orientated tactics on D1T1, only 10% remained the same on D2T2, i.e., most of the children who started performing the task as a 'random' or 'game of chance' increasingly learned to carry out task-orientated tactics.

Interestingly, and perhaps as a consequence of the fact that differences hinged on two (and not three or more) similar pictures, children who had not fully solved the task on their first attempt (even when such had entailed task-orientated moves), simply tended to place the alternative card as the right picture– this is especially noticeable on D2T2. This might explain the high rate (40%) of children performing task-accomplishment tactics yet not fully succeeding in the task at first, and then ending up solving the activity with no subsequent task-oriented negotiation, as we show in Figures 15 and 16.

Figure 15. Children: task solving progression

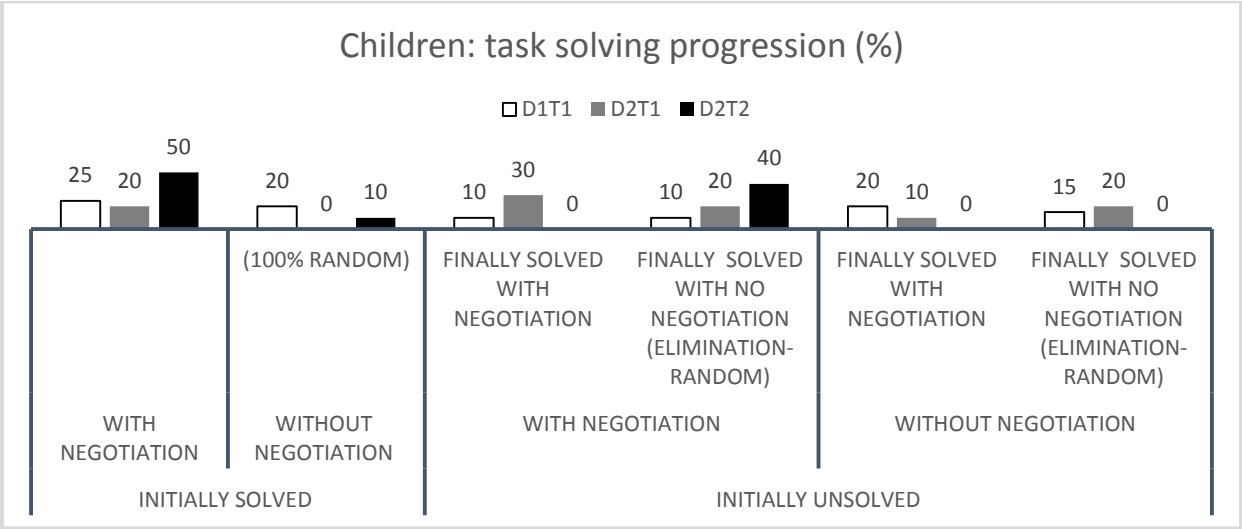
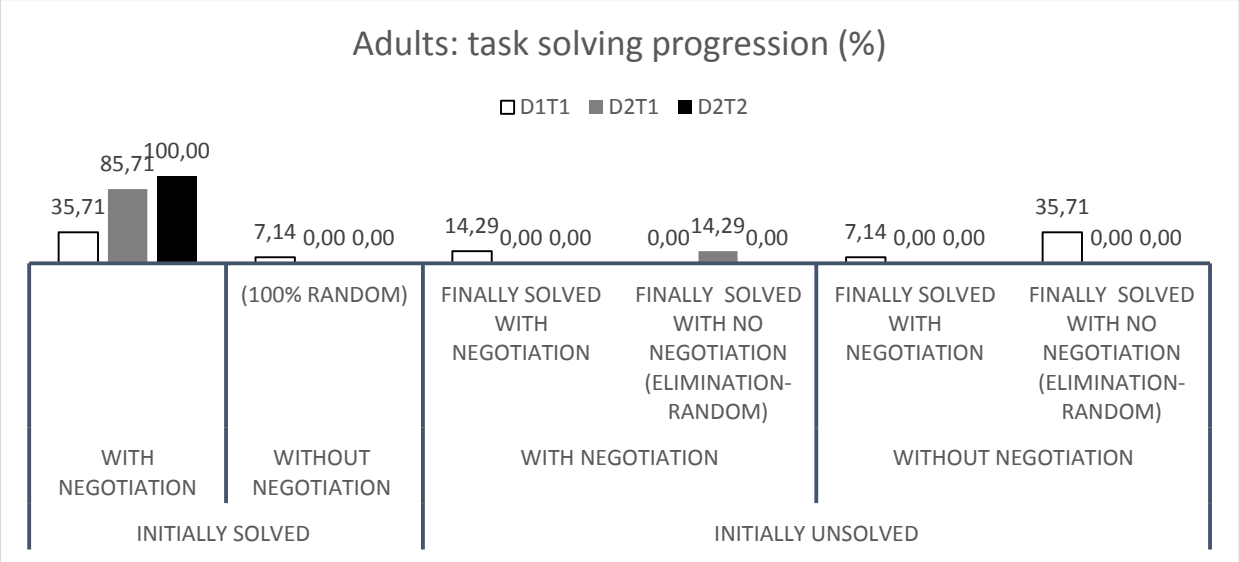


Figure 16. Adults: task solving progression



On the whole, therefore, results are in line with findings by Pinter (2006), in which children used fewer systematic and predictable task-related strategies, leading adults to outperform them significantly and achieve a higher task-solving success rate.

3.2.ASSESSMENT OF ORAL PROFICIENCY

The results in the present section will be used to analyse the suitability and validity of the paired OPT format, i.e., peer-peer, as a means to achieve a wide spectrum of language samples in the oral proficiency of A1 EFL children and adults. Since, as mentioned before, the ultimate goal of RQ2 is not to is not to assess the students' production according to existing rating scales, we will answer it by supplementing some of the features of interaction in RQ1 with additional aspects of the learners' performance, such as duration, amount of production, i.e., number of utterances, and turn-taking patterns (following L. Brooks, 2009), thus leading to the following scheme:

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Common coded elements for RQ1 & RQ2</th><th>Additional coded elements for RQ2</th></tr>
<tr><th>NoM strategies</th><th>L1 influence</th><th>Task tactics and success rate</th><th>Additional features of interaction</th></tr>
<tr>
<td rowspan="2">Conversational adjustments
•Overall results
•Clarification requests
•Confirmation checks
•Comprehension checks
•Acknowledgements

Repetition

Self-repetition
Other-repetition</td>
<td rowspan="2">• L1 use
• L1 structures</td>
<td rowspan="2">Solved
• With negotiation
• Without negotiation

Initially unsolved
With negotiation
• Re-checks
• Finally solved with negotiation
• Finally solved without negotiation

Without negotiation
• Re-checks
• Finally solved with negotiation
• Finally solved without negotiation</td>
<td rowspan="2">• Amount of production
• Duration
• Turn-taking patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr></tr>
</table>

We will be comparing and contrasting the results obtained in the paired OPT (D2T1 and D2T2) with i) the data in the individual OPT (D1T1 and D1T2). Additionally, we will also compare data from our children (both interactive modes) ii) with existing samples of A1 official examinations, namely Cambridge YL (Movers) and Trinity GESE Grade II, since both examinations can be taken by children.

In order to best answer RQ2 the following pairing combinations have been studied:

1. INDIVIDUAL OPT / PAIRED OPT
    a. CHILD-EXPERT (Ind. OPT) / CHILD-CHILD (Paired OPT)
    b. ADULT-EXPERT (In. OPT)/ ADULT-ADULT (Paired OPT)

The statistical analysis was carried out using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test (a non- parametric equivalent alternative to the matched-pairs *t*-test). Significance level was fixed at $p = 0.05$. Statistically significant differences are marked in bold.

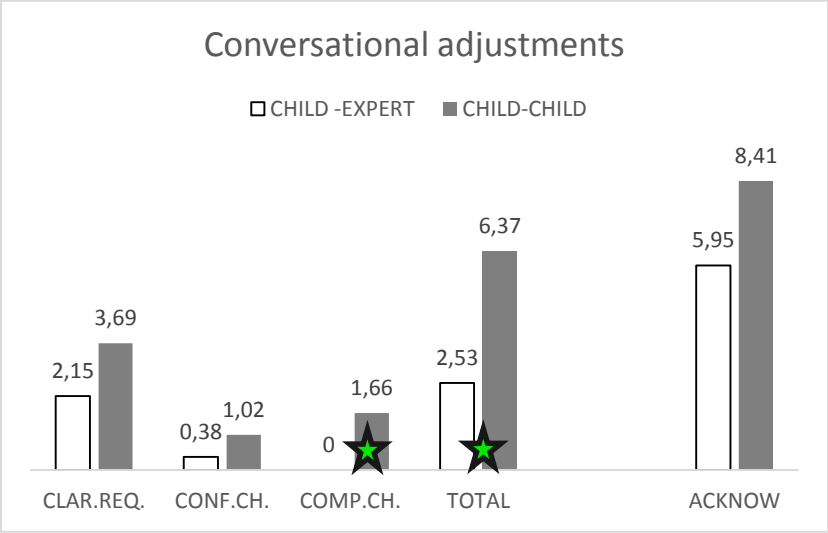
3.2.1. NoM strategies

This section will initially present and succinctly interpret the results (3.2.1.1). A further subsection will discuss them in greater depth in relation to the research questions and hypotheses formulated in this dissertation (3.2.1.2).

3.2.1.1.Results: NoM strategies

The results we present in Figure 17 compare the conversational adjustments of i) children with an expert of English and ii) child-child interactions (D1T1 and D1T2, vs D2T1 and D2T2), as well as the conversational adjustments on existing public samples from Cambridge's YL (Movers) and Trinity GESE Grade 2:

Figure 17. Child-expert (Individual OPT) / Child-child (Paired OPT): conversational adjustments



As observed in Figure 17, Paired (child-child) interaction generated consistently more conversational adjustments of all types analysed. Significant statistical differences were found in the total number of adjustments (z= -2,527 [b], p = 0,01), as well as in the number of comprehension checks (z= -2,264 [b], p = 0,024). Non-significant differences between both

interaction modes were found in the percentage of clarification requests (z= -1,180[b], p = 0,238), confirmation checks (z= -0,957 [b], p = 0,339) and acknowledgement use (z= -1,132 [b], p = 0,258).

Consequently, children appear to have gone past the threshold level suggested by Lázaro-Ibarrola and Azpilicueta-Martínez (2015), since they were able to negotiate for meaning when interacting with their peers. These findings are, therefore, very much in line with Oliver's (2002) proficiency-NoM scale, where findings showed that "the least native-like pairs produced the most amount of negotiation, with gradually decreasing amounts as the pairings became more native-like in proficiency" (Oliver, 2002, p. abstract).

Likewise, the notion of the egocentricity of children leading to less negotiation of meaning clashes with these results, since children made a more extensive use of conversational adjustments when interacting with their peers; this is even more noticeable in the case of the comprehension checks. In this respect, there is a conspicuous absence of this type of adjustment in the child-expert mode.

This might be so as a result of their taking it for granted that their proficient-speaking counterpart in D1T1 and D1T2 understood all of their output, and so they might have relied on him for any possible communication breakdowns. By contrast, the higher rate of clarification requests in child-child interaction may be related to their getting (or feeling they were getting)

less reliable input from their counterparts, as the following example illustrates:

(43) Student A: *In the second, the boy and the girl are, are…are… are… the father are looking the… the… the book… the yellow book and the boy and the girl are… are… I don't know the…*
Student B: *They are imagine a sandwich?*
Student A: ***Yes!*** *In the third* (pronounced '/tɜːd/'), *in the third* (pronounced '/tɜːd/') *his dad are in the supermarket and girl* (pronounced ' /bɜːl/'), *girl and boy are imagine in the toyshop.*

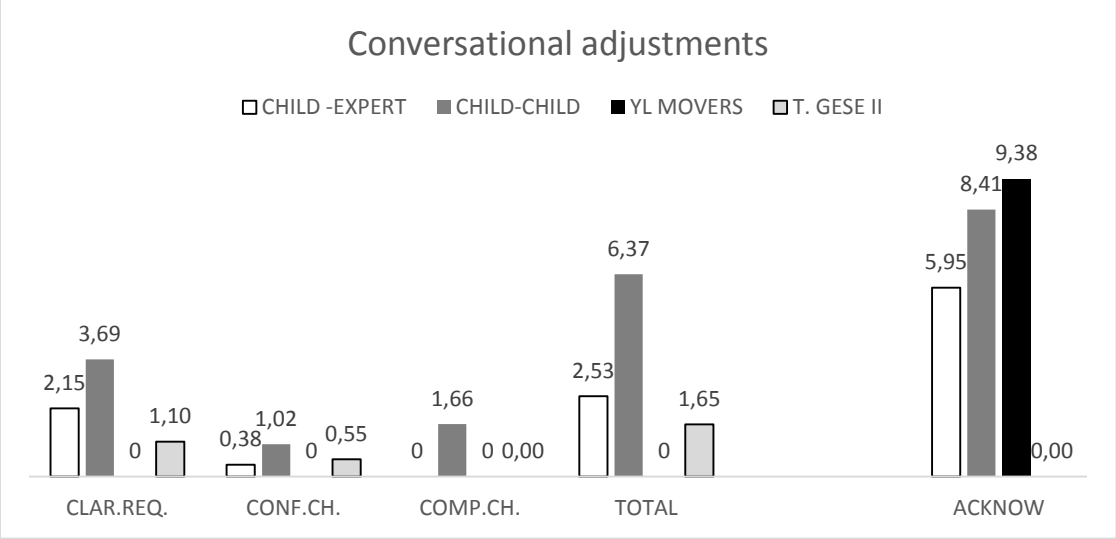
(Child-child)

Student 'A' confirms student 'B's sandwich hypothesis, while, in reality what the children in the picture are thinking of is the toyshop.

Acknowledgement use was higher than any other conversational adjustment in both interactive modes. It is also noticeable how, the higher the use of 'acknowledgements' within the same couple, the fewer comprehension checks they produced, something already mentioned in 4.1.

In Figure 18 we turn to the results found in existing public samples from Cambridge's YL (Movers) and Trinity GESE Grade 2 (Individual OPIs), and compare them with the figures in our study:

Figure 18. Conversational adjustments in existing public samples from Cambridge's YL (Movers) and Trinity GESE Grade 2 (Individual OPIs)



There is a complete absence of conversational adjustments in the public samples (whose participants were children) analysed from Cambridge Young Learner's Movers test, with the exception of acknowledgements, whose results are even higher than the ones in child-child interaction in the present study. It is relevant, nonetheless, to take a closer look at these representative examples from one of Mover's samples (Arthur), and compare the type of acknowledgements generated in such test with some of the ones in paired interaction (examples belong to different dyads):

(44) Examiner: *Ok. Now, Arthur, look at these pictures.*
Student: ***Yes.***
[Acknowledgement]
Examiner: *They look the same, but some things are different. This boy has got earache, but this boy has got stomachache.*
Student: ***Ok.***
[Acknowledgement]

(Cambridge Young Learners: Movers)

(45) Student B: *Is sitting in the chair.*
Student A: ***The third?***
[Acknowledgement]
Student B: *The boy is putting the coat and the girl is putting the shoes.*
Student A: ***The fourth?***
[Acknowledgement]

(Child-child)

(46) Student A: *The… Their father are… Their father it has a… one thing yellow is in his hand and… the…. And the… and the boy and the girl are… are thinking to the toyshop.*
Student B: ***Ok, continue.***
[Acknowledgement]

(Child-child)

Note the subtle difference in meaning between (44), in which Arthur responds saying *'yes'* or *'ok'* with a phatic function, confirming understanding in the briefest possible way, with the indirect acknowledgements in examples (45) and (46). In these, the speaker is co-participating more equally and actively in the interaction, since s/he is inviting the narrator to move on to the next picture in the activity, the structure of the task *driving* the language produced.

Samples from Trinity's GESE II (which only included adult candidates) showed lower rates than paired interaction in all conversational adjustments, and their rate of acknowledgements was nonexistent. Its results were also lower (with the exception of the confirmation checks) than those in

child-expert interaction in the current study. This fact seems to suggest that, unlike individual OPT lacking specific tasks other than answering factual questions, the activities in the present study constitute "closed-ended and precision oriented and require the exchange of uniquely held information, thus promoting modified interaction among participants and orient their attention to form, function, and meaning" (Pica, Kang, & Sauro, 2006, abstract).

In what follows, we concentrate on the results obtained with the adult group. Figure 19 shows the conversational adjustments of i) adults with an expert and ii) adult-adult interactions (D1T1 and D1T2, vs D2T1 and D2T2).

Figure 19. Adult-expert (Individual OPT) / Adult-adult (Paired OPT): conversational adjustments

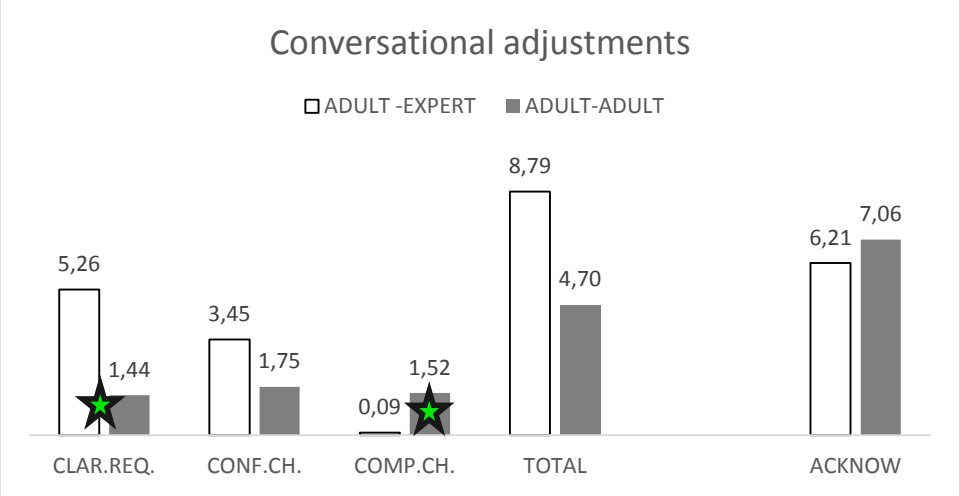


Figure 19 clearly shows that the rate of conversational adjustments when adults interacted with an expert was higher than when they did so with a similar-level peer, yet such difference was not statistically significant (*z*= -

1,612 [b], p = 0,107). Significant differences included clarification requests (z= -2,861 [b], p = 0,004), which were more often displayed in the adult-expert mode, and comprehension checks, higher in the paired format (z= -2,214 [b], p = 0,027). Non-significant differences between both formats were found in confirmation checks (z= -1,181 [b], p = 0,238) and acknowledgment use (z= -1,647 [b], p = 0,099).

The higher use of conversational adjustments when interacting with an expert might have to do with several factors, including the possibility of being more used to teacher-fronted classes and interacting with a teacher – thus not adopting the more submissive role children displayed- as well as, possibly, with their poor understanding of what the expert was saying, since clarification requests were noticeably higher. A subsequent survey carried out with these participants revealed some of them struggled to understand the expert speaker at times; this might partly account for such higher rate. Moreover, a high proportion of the adults who used confirmation checks profusely also resorted to clarification requests frequently. This supports the idea of their comparatively low listening comprehension skills. In this sense, the researcher reports frequently having to slow down his speech rate when interacting with adults for this very reason.

Regarding the number of comprehension checks, on the other hand, they might have assumed that their proficient-speaking counterpart in D1T1 and D1T2 comprehended most of their output, and seem to have relied on him

for any possible communication disruption, while, by contrast, they seem to have needed to resort to this adjustment when negotiating with a peer.

The use of acknowledgements was noticeably higher than any other strategy in both interaction modes. While its use was higher in the paired mode, yet, again, differences were not significant. In this respect it is pertinent to highlight how several adults carried really high numbers of automatic expressions in the L1 serving as acknowledgements (not categorized as 'acknowledgements' because they were carried out in the L1) when interacting with the expert, and then, interestingly, shifted to the TL to perform acknowledgements in English when interacting with their peers, as in the following examples (47), (48):

(47) Expert: *Let's start! Number one: there are two girls having fun. They're playing with a doll. The doll is in the cot. They're celebrating a birthday party.*
Student: ***Vale.*** *Cot… What is cot?*
[Acknowledgement]
Expert: *A cot is like… a baby bed.*
Student: *Baby bed.* ***Vale.***
[Acknowledgement]

Student 'A' (adult) resorts to the term 'vale' (Spanish for 'alright') systematically, up to 14 times within the same interaction on D1T1 (adult-expert).

(48)

Student B: *They are sitting.*
Student A: *The two person are sitting?*
Student B: *Two, two are sitting.*
Student A: ***Ok, very good. The third*** (pron. '/θɜːs/') ***picture, the second is ok.*** [Acknowledgement]

(Adult-adult)

The very same student 'A' does not use the Spanish term *'vale'* at all, and resorts to English (at phrase level) to confirm comprehension when interacting with a peer (D2T1).

After having presented results related to conversational adjustments and acknowledgements, we now focus on repetition, a strategy that, as shown before, is profusely used by the participants.

In line with the previous sections, we start with the repetitions of i) children with an expert of English and ii) child-child interactions (D1T1 and D1T2, vs D2T1 and D2T2), as well as the repetitions found on existing public samples from Cambridge's YL (Movers) and Trinity GESE Grade 2. These results are featured in Figures 20 and 21.

Figure 20. Child-expert (Individual OPT) / Child-child (Paired OPT): repetitions

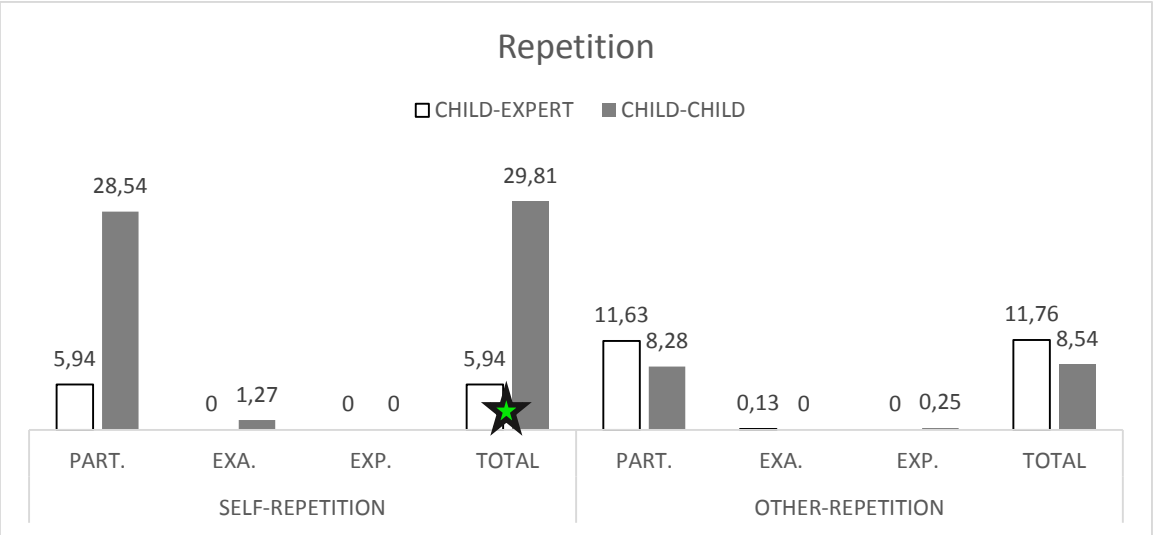


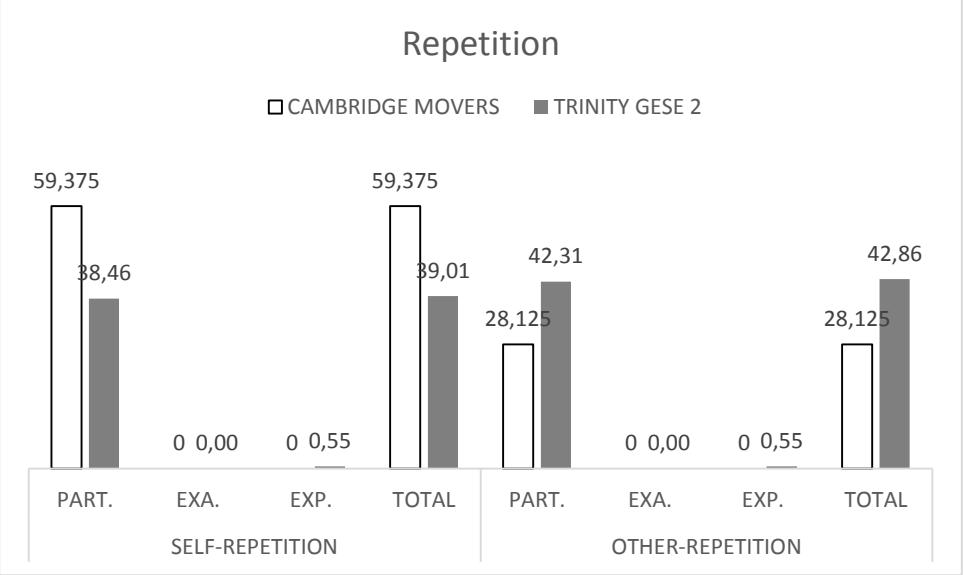
Figure 20 illustrates how instances of repetition were notably higher than those in previous EFL studies on children interaction (e.g., Azkarai & Imaz Agirre, 2015; Lázaro-Ibarrola & Azpilicueta-Martínez, 2015). Children tended to self-repeat when interacting with their peers, and differences were statistically significant if compared with child-expert interaction in that category (z= -3,645 b, $p < .001$).

Conversely, when children interacted with an expert they produced more instances of 'other-repetition', although differences in this case were not statistically significant (z= -1,535 [b], p = 0,125). This might hint at a selective 'imitation' strategy, by which they – consciously or not – mimic the language produced by their different status interlocutor, since strategies are defined as "specific behaviours or thoughts that learners select consciously or semi-consciously with the goal of improving their knowledge and understanding in the target language" (Cohen, 2003, p. 279). This fact which

might be mirrored in their teacher-student interaction in their classroom. Clearly, nearly all instances of repetition (both types) were found in the 'partial' subcategory.

We will now analyse repetition rates on existing public samples from Cambridge's YL (Movers) and Trinity GESE Grade 2 (Individual OPIs). These are presented in Figure 21.

Figure 21. Repetitions in existing public samples from Cambridge's YL (Movers) and Trinity GESE Grade 2 (Individual OPIs)



As can be observed in Figure 21, instances of repetition in both Cambridge's YL Movers and Trinity GESE Grade 2 were much more frequent than those in the present study, to the extent of being present in the majority of the students' discourse (self-repetition in the case of Movers), and nearly so in the case of Trinity (39%: self-repetition and 42% for other-repetition). We believe the interview format is structured in a way that lends itself to the

proliferation of repetition, as can be noted in the sample below, a transcription of Trinity Gese Grade 2:

(49)
Examiner: *That's ok. Is it Tuesday today?*
Student: ***Tuesday today**… Erm… it is… erm… Tuesday…*
Examiner: *Or is it Friday?*
Student: *No, **Tuesday**.*
Examiner: *Tuesday, ok.*
Student: *It is **Tuesday**.*
Examiner: *Aha, and what month is it?*
Student: *No, sorry, I… it is Friday, today.*
Examiner: *(Friday, yes, Friday, yeah).*
Student: *Oh, **sorry**.*
Examiner: *What month is it?*
Student: ***What month… is it? It is May?***
Examiner: *May… And what month is your birthday in?*
Student: *Birth in… I was **birth**, **birthday** on December 19th 92.*

(Trinity GESE Grade II – *Ceren*)

As can be noted, it is hard in this kind of testing not to repeat part of what your interlocutor said (interlocutor always acting as topic initiators), since part of the answer is often included in the question: e.g.:

(50)
Examiner: *And how old is your brother?*
Student A: *My **brother** is 26, 26.*
Examiner: *And how old is your father?*
Student A: ***My father** 61.*
Examiner: *And your **mother**?*
Student A: ***My mother** 50.*

(Trinity GESE Grade II – *Vojtech*)

While this phenomenon might constitute an interesting scaffold for students at this level, doubt may be cast as for the authenticity of the language spectrum produced by learners, if compared with the type of discourse generated in more specific task-oriented activities.

This is more clearly discerned if we look at the following tables (Table 13 and Table 14). Table 13 shows all instances of repetition (and rates, below) in the Movers test in its entirety, while Table 14 includes the same variable in the part of the test including specific tasks (namely the *spot-the-difference*, the *storytelling* and the *odd-one-out* tasks):

Table 13. Repetitions Cambridge's YL Movers (whole test)

REPETITION							
SELF-REPETITION				OTHER-REPETITION			
PART.	EXA.	EXP.	TOTAL	PART.	EXA.	EXP.	TOTAL
15	0	0	15	10	0	0	10
23	0	0	23	8	0	0	8
38	0	0	38	18	0	0	18
59,38%	0,00%	0,00%	59,38%	28,13%	0,00%	0,00%	28,13%

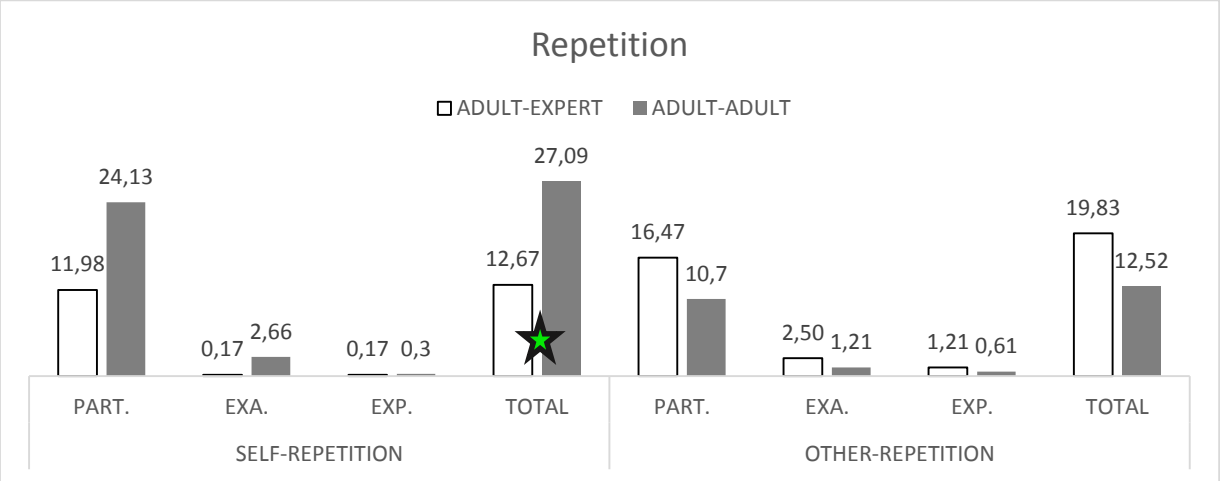
Table 14. Repetitions Cambridge's YL Movers (specific tasks)

REPETITION							
SELF-REPETITION				OTHER-REPETITION			
PART.	EXA.	EXP.	TOTAL	PART.	EXA.	EXP.	TOTAL
11	0	0	11	3	0	0	3
18	0	0	18	2	0	0	2
29	0	0	29	5	0	0	5
65,91%	0,00%	0,00%	65,91%	11,36%	0,00%	0,00%	11,36%

Note how, out of the 18 instances of other-repetition of the whole test, just 5 of them are produced during the three specific tasks mentioned before.

Now, the results regarding repetition for adults are presented. Figure 22 compares the repetitions of i) adults with an expert and ii) adult-adult interactions (D1T1 and D1T2, vs D2T1 and D2T2):

Figure 22. Adult-expert (Individual OPT) / Adult-adult (Paired OPT): repetitions



In Figure 22, it is apparent that the rate patterns in this parameter are remarkably similar to the ones obtained with children. Again, overall rates are very high, but, perhaps more interestingly, adults also self-repeat more when interacting with a partner, while they tend to 'mimic' more of their interlocutor's output when s/he is an expert. As is the case with children, differences between both interactive modes were statistically significant regarding self-repetition (z= -3,112 [b], p = 0,002), yet not so in the case of other-repetition (z= -1,433 [b], p = 0,152).

3.2.1.2.Discussion of hypotheses: NoM strategies

Hypotheses regarding NoM Strategies:

i. The paired OPT in the present study will elicit a wider range of interactional features than

   a. The individual format.

This hypothesis was mostly supported. All statistically significant differences regarding NoM strategies (with the exception of clarification requests in the adult group) showed higher rates in the paired interactive mode. These results concur with those in Brooks (2009), revealing the co-construction of a more linguistically demanding performance than the interaction between students and experts. However, children were visibly more consistently benefited in this respect, since adults displayed an overall higher use of conversational adjustments (although not significant) in the individual mode.

As explained above, this fact might be hinting at several elements impinging on the adults' higher conversational adjustment rate: regular adult-teacher interaction, in which their statuses (including age) might be less marked than the child-teacher one, and, perhaps more determining, a lack of homogeneity in their skills, i.e., a comparatively low listening comprehension skill that could account for the increase of clarification requests and confirmation checks when speaking with an expert. Acknowledgement use was consistently higher in the paired format in both groups.

Repetition rates mirrored a similar pattern: the individual format led to statistically significant more self-repetition (both groups) than the paired format, while the latter yielded higher figures of other-repetition, although differences were not statistically significant in this case. This might be hinting at a natural strategic use across groups, i.e., students mimicking their expert interlocutor's language.

All these findings may be more graphically interpreted in the tables below:

Table 15. Child-expert (Individual OPT) / Child-child (Paired OPT). NoM strategies

CHILD-EXPERT / CHILD-CHILD INTERACTIONS		
STATISTICAL DIFFERENCE (Wilcoxon signed-rank test)	**SIGNIFICANT**	**NON-SIGNIFICANT**
Conversational adjustments	**z= -2,527** [b] ***p* = 0,01** (higher in paired OPT)	
Clarification requests		z= -1,180 [b] *p* = 0,238
Confirmation checks		z= -0,957 [b] *p* = 0,339
Comprehension checks	**z= -2,264** [b] ***p* = 0,024** (higher in paired OPT)	
Acknowledgements		z= -1,132 [b] *p* = 0,258
Self-repetition	**z= -3,645** [b] ***p* < .001** (higher in paired OPT)	
Other-repetition		z= -1,535 [b] *p* = 0,125

Table 16. Adult-expert (Individual OPT) / Adult-adult interactions (Paired OPT). NoM strategies

ADULT-EXPERT / ADULT-ADULT INTERACTIONS		
STATISTICAL DIFFERENCE (Wilcoxon signed-rank test)	**SIGNIFICANT**	**NON-SIGNIFICANT**
Conversational adjustments		z= -1,612 [b] *p* = 0,107
Clarification requests	**z= -2,861 [b] *p* = 0,004** (higher in individual OPT)	
Confirmation checks		z= -1,181 b *p* = 0,238
Comprehension checks	**z= -2,214 [b] *p* = 0,027** (higher in paired OPT)	
Acknowledgements		z= -1,647 [b] *p* = 0,099
Self-repetition	**z= -3,112 [b] *p* = 0,002** (higher in paired OPT)	
Other-repetition		z= -1,433 [b] *p* = 0,152

i. The paired OPT in the present study will elicit a wider range of interactional features than

   b. Already existing formats, namely Cambridge YL (Movers) and Trinity GESE Grade II.

This hypothesis was partly supported, since results on conversational adjustments were conclusive, although those in repetition were higher in the official tests, in spite of the high rates provided by the participants in the study. Findings regarding conversational adjustment rates in the present study compared with those in public samples from Cambridge's YL Movers and

Trinity's GESE Grade II reveal an extremely low percentage in the last two (fully non-existent in Movers, except for the acknowledgements), supporting the notion that the discourse generated in those tests lacks important features of natural interaction. Acknowledgement use was non-existent in Trinity's GESE Grade II, yet used to a high degree in Cambridge's YL Movers, reaching an even slightly higher percentage than the one in the paired interactions (either group) in the present study.

Repetitions in the Cambridge's YL Movers were present in the majority of the students' utterances and nearly so in Trinity's GESE Grade II test, thus clearly exceeding the –already high - rates in the present study. While the Trinity test does follow the distribution pattern in our study, i.e., more instances of other-repetition over self-repetition, this was not the case with Cambridge's YL Movers. A more qualitative look (above) at the samples provided reveals, nonetheless, how the more constrained, tester-controlled interview-like structure in these tests (particularly Trinity's) directs test-takers to fixed, factual answers containing some sort of repetition. This also seems supported by the fact that the task-specific sections in the Movers test include comparatively fewer instances of this NoM strategy.

In conclusion, these finding support the assumption that, even at A1 of the CEFR, paired interaction through suitable tasks leads to more symmetrical, less institutional discourse eliciting a wider range of features of interaction than the individual format, as previous studies had proven in the

mid-upper layers of the CEFR (e.g., L. Brooks, 2009; Ducasse, 2008; Ducasse & Brown, 2009; A. M. Ducasse & A. Brown, 2011; Galaczi, 2004, 2013).

3.2.2. L1 influence

As with previous sections, we will firstly present and briefly explain the results obtained for L1 in both age groups and the different pairing types (3.2.2.1). Next, we will summarize the results and discuss them at length in relation to the research questions and hypotheses of the present study (3.2.2.2).

3.2.2.1.Results: L1 influence

The following results cover the L1 influence of i) children with an expert of English and ii) child-child interactions (D1T1 and D1T2, vs D2T1 and D2T2). This parameter has not been compared with existing public samples from Cambridge's YL (Movers) and Trinity GESE Grade 2 due to the fact that the students in those samples did not share Spanish as a common L1.

Figure 23. Child-expert / Child-child: L1 influence

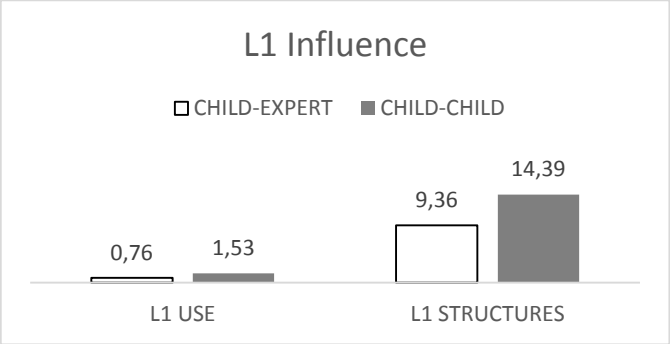


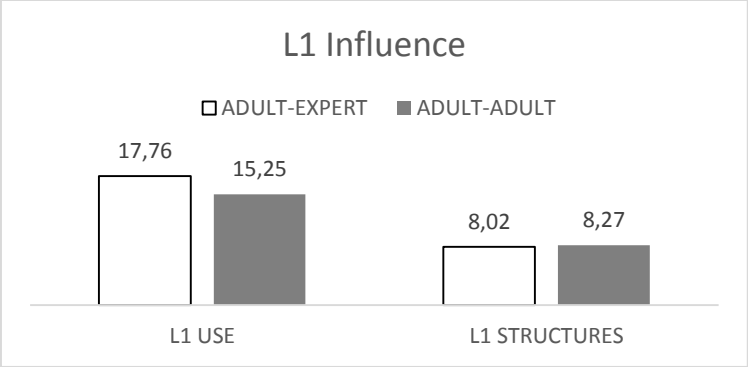
Figure 23 reflects the fact that explicit L1 use among the children in the present study was almost inexistent, therefore significantly lower than results reported in similar studies (e.g., M.P. García Mayo & A. Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2015; Lázaro-Ibarrola & Hidalgo, 2017), and concurring with the low rates reported in Lázaro-Ibarrola and Azpilicueta-Martínez (2015). However, and, as observed in Lázaro-Ibarrola and Hidalgo (2017), the children in the study relatively frequently produced instances of ungrammatical sentences in English revealing following a Spanish structural pattern. Neither feature revealed statistically significant differences between both interactive formats (L1 use: z= -1,150 [b], p = 0,250; L1 structures: z= -1,297 [b], p = 0,195).

In short, these two features (a low explicit L1 use yet a comparatively high rate of L1 structural transfer) seem to be characteristic of EFL children at this stage, since patterns were repeated in both interactive modes, and, although there was an increase in the paired mode, differences were not statistically significant. Given the increasing questioning on the role of L1 in L2 learning regarding both teacher-learner and peer interaction (Cook, 2001;

Turnbull & Arnett, 2002; Wells, 1999), the findings in the present study confirm that L1 terms are used scarcely and wisely in both interaction modes (child-child and child-expert), but warn us about the possibility that structural transfer could be reinforced when interaction occurs among peers at low levels of proficiency. Since such transfer might be triggered by learners' perception of partial similarities between the L1 and the L2, and may be especially difficult to overcome when learners are frequently in contact with peers making the same errors (Lightbown & Spada, 2006), this paper advocates the use of interactive activities in which learners' attention is also drawn to form, even at beginner level, and calls for further research on the developmental L2 readiness of learners at this level and age to benefit effectively from such practices.

Figure 24 includes results comparing the L1 influence of i) adults with an expert and ii) adult-adult interactions (D1T1 and D1T2, vs D2T1 and D2T2):

Figure 24. Adult-expert / Adult-adult: L1 influence



On the whole both interactive modes yielded similar results, since statistical differences were not significant and overall values are remarkably similar (L1 use: z= -0,157 [b], p = 0,875; L1 structures: z= -0,535 [b], p = 0,592). In both cases adults displayed a clear use of L1 terms, while L1 structural transfer was also noticeable, although to a lesser degree.

Consequently, the type of interactive format does not seem to be significantly impinging on the adults group's production of Spanish terms, nor does it seem to alter the degree of L1 permeability in their discourse.

3.2.2.2.Discussion of hypotheses: L1 influence

Hypothesis regarding L1 Influence:

Due to the lack of research –to the best of our knowledge - analysing the degree of L1 influence of these two populations in both interactive modes:

v. No specific hypothesis was formulated as for the degree of L1 influence of children and adults when performing individual or paired interaction.

The amount of L1 influence, coming into sight via explicit terms or indirectly by way of structural transfer, does not seem to be significantly affected by variations in the interaction mode selected.

As a result, we may infer that such influence constitutes a more permanent, less alterable trait of the students' interlanguage at this level (both populations), whose differences have been duly reported in 4.1.

The following tables compare the information above more graphically:

Table 17. Child-expert / Child-child interactions. L1 Influence

CHILD-EXPERT / CHILD-CHILD INTERACTIONS		
STATISTICAL DIFFERENCE (Wilcoxon signed-rank test)	**SIGNIFICANT**	**NON-SIGNIFICANT**
L1 use		z= -1,150 [b] *p* = 0,250
L1 structures		z= -1,297 [b] *p* = 0,195

Table 18. Adult-expert / Adult-adult interactions. L1 Influence

ADULT-EXPERT / ADULT-ADULT INTERACTIONS		
STATISTICAL DIFFERENCE (Wilcoxon signed-rank test)	**SIGNIFICANT**	**NON-SIGNIFICANT**
L1 use		z= -0,157 [b] *p* = 0,875
L1 structures		z= -0,535 [b] *p* = 0,592

3.2.3. Task tactics and success rate

It is pertinent to remind the reader that results in this section are shown in percentages, since no statistical analyses were made with the aim of providing readers with a more functional qualitative approach. By contrast,

additional information and diagrams including children / adult overall results will also be provided so as to aid readers interpret the results more graphically. Finally, it is relevant to point out that the two different roles that the learners took on along the task will now be of special interest when analysing several aspects within this section.

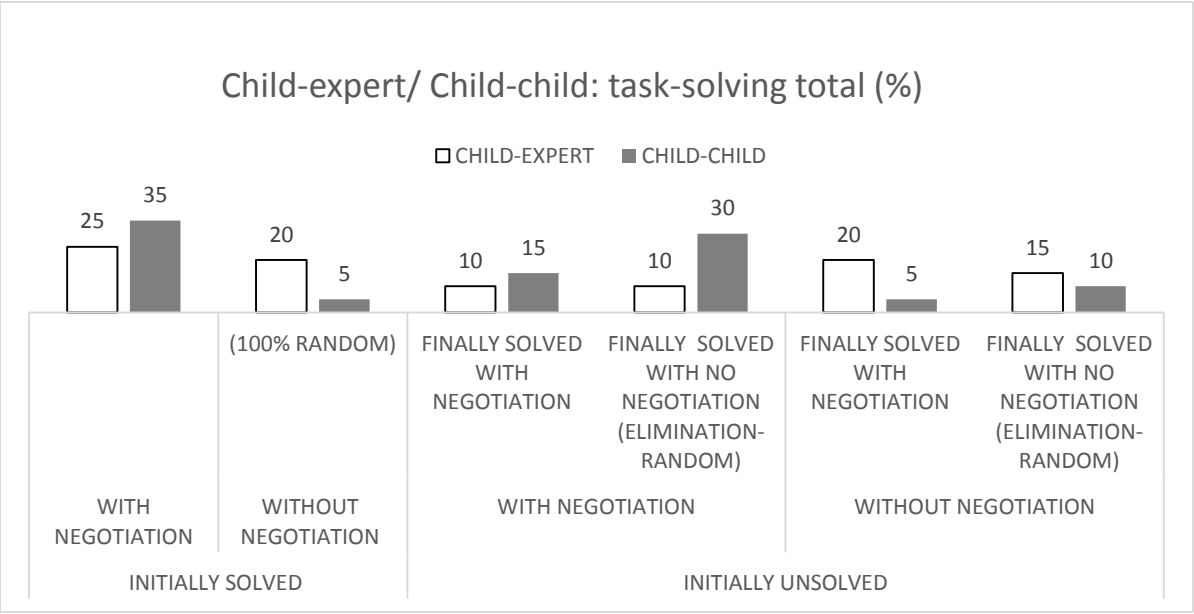
An initial subsection (3.2.3.1) will present and provide a first interpretation which will be discussed in further detail in relation to the hypotheses in the present Thesis on 3.1.3.2.

3.2.3.1.Results: Task tactics and success rate

Firstly we will present results covering the task-related tactics of i) children interacting with an expert of English and ii) child-child interactions (D1T1 and D1T2, vs D2T1 and D2T2; Figure 25). This parameter has not been compared with existing public samples from Cambridge's YL (Movers) and Trinity GESE Grade 2 due to differences in the tasks themselves, some of which (e.g., Trinity's) did not allow students to develop specific task-solving strategies[17]. It is pertinent to remind the reader that this section of the study includes results shown in percentages, since no statistical analyses were made with the aim of providing readers with more a readable outlook.

[17] i.e., learners just had to answer to factual questions about themselves, and the succinct referential task included did not allow the development of task-solving tactics as such.

Figure 25. Child-expert (Individual OPT)/ Child-child (Paired OPT): Task-tactics and success rate



The results in Figure 25 suggest that children performed more task-solving tactics when they interacted with a peer than when they did so with an expert since rates regarding task-solving tactics and initial success were higher in paired than in individual OPT. These results should be interpreted with caution, since, unlike the rest of parameters, getting acquainted with the task might have played a part in their task-solving deployment (see *Figure 15. Children: task solving progression, in 3.1.3.2.)*, particularly in *shaping* their main strategy as either:

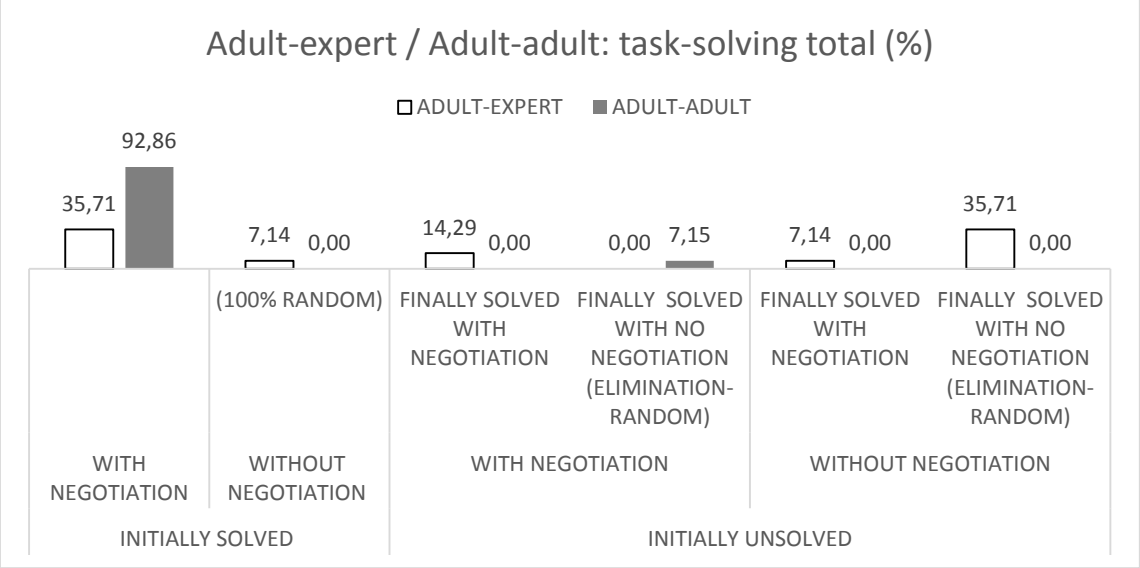
- Carrying out fully effective task-orientated strategies and succeeding in the task (50% of children).
- As mentioned in 4.1., and most probably linked to the fact that differences hinged on two (and not three or more) similar pictures,

children who had nearly, but not fully solved the task on their first attempt (using task-orientated moves), simply placed the alternative card as the right picture– this is especially noticeable on D2T2 (40% of children)

Nevertheless, other factors impinging on the positive results in the paired format might have to do with i) narrators providing less reliable information and story-builders having to regularly ensure it, and, additionally ii) students feeling less pressure when interacting with a peer, or not fully getting a grasp of the task's mechanics, i.e., failing to understand that three of the pictures are 'wrong' (story builders) and that they can (should) ask in order to rule them out.

Figure 26 shows the results comparing the task-related tactics of i) adults with an expert and ii) adult-adult interactions (D1T1 and D1T2, vs D2T1 and D2T2):

Figure 26. Adult-expert (Individual OPT)/ Adult-adult (Paired OPT): Task-tactics and success rate



It is observable from Figure 26 that paired interaction yielded a noticeably higher rate of students carrying out task-orientated tactics. The number of students doing so successfully, and at an earlier stage in each task, was also higher: the percentage of students solving the task successfully by way of task-solving tactics reached 92,86% in the paired format, in contrast to 35,71% in the individual mode. However, and, very much like the children, familiarity with the task might be related to such increase in performance (see *Figure 16. Adults: task solving progression, in 3.1.3.2.).*

This notwithstanding, some adults reported occasionally not getting enough –or reliable enough - information from their partners – thus leading them to resort to more task-solving tactics than they did with the expert. Some learners also reported having felt more relaxed when interacting with a peer,

and a few of them seemed to have initial trouble understanding the need to ask rule-out questions in order to perform the task successfully.

3.2.3.2.Discussion of hypotheses: Task tactics and success rate

Hypothesis regarding task tactics and success rate:

Again, as with L1 Influence in RQ2, the lack of studies researching task-solving strategy use of these two populations in both interactive modes does not allow us to formulate any specific hypothesis:

i. No specific hypothesis was formulated as for the task-solving strategy use of children and adults when performing individual or paired interaction.

Interestingly, an increase in the deployment of task-related tactics and success rate on the paired mode was noticeable in both groups. However, we should refrain from establishing a simple unidirectional relation between the interaction mode and the amount of task-tactics used, since additional factors seem to be affecting this parameter.

On the one hand, while participants in both groups affirmed having enjoyed all tasks and reported not feeling daunted in either interaction mode, some of them affirmed having felt more at ease when doing the task with a partner. On the other hand, as participants repeated the tasks, there appeared

to be a gradual increase in the degree to which both groups managed to succeed in the them, and, equally relevant, in the extent to which they carried out specific tactics, e.g., keeping a verbal tally of the differences, getting their partners to focus on the same elements in the pictures, checking and monitoring their interactions, to name but some.

In light of these findings, more research would be needed in order to ascertain the extent to which the interactive mode and the familiarity influence the students' performance in this aspect of interaction.

3.2.4. Additional features of interaction

This section comprises the results and discussion of the amount of production, duration and turns of children and adults in the interactive combinations included in RQ2, i.e., interaction with an age and level-matched peer (paired), and interaction with an expert speaker of English. Results with children will also be compared to data gathered in the analysis of existing public samples from Cambridge's YL (Movers) and Trinity GESE Grade 2.

An initial subsection (3.2.4.1) will provide results followed by a concise explanation, will 3.2.4.2. will analyse them from a broader perspective.

3.2.4.1.Results: Additional features of interaction

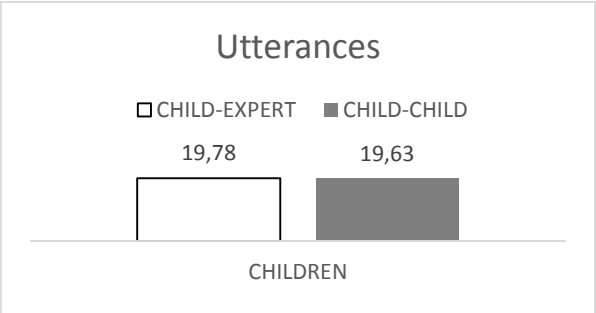
Since the aim of this part of this Thesis (RQ2) is to primarily compare the validity of the different interactive layouts within the same age groups, results in all three additional features of interaction will be initially provided for children, and followed subsequently by those in the adult group.

The results below cover the amount of production, duration and turns of children i) with an expert of English and ii) child-child interactions (D1T1 and D1T2, vs D2T1 and D2T2), as well as the same rates aspects in existing public samples from Cambridge's YL (Movers) and Trinity GESE Grade 2.

Amount of production

The following rates comprise the amount of production in child-expert interaction and that in child-child exchanges (children D1T1 and D1T2 vs children D2T1 and D2T2):

Figure 26.. Child-expert (Individual OPT) / Child-child (Paired OPT): amount of production



As Figure 26 shows, there were no significant differences in the overall number of utterances yielded by children comparing the individual and the paired interaction modes, to the extent of being remarkably similar (z= -0,342 [b], p = 0,732). Results show that, even in the absence of a teacher-figure, children are able to freely interact and generate the same amount of language that they would if they were doing so with an expert, when provided with a suitable task.

The following Figure (27) shows results in the public samples analysed from Cambridge YL Movers and Trinity GESE Grade II (Individual OPIs). We have differentiated the number or utterances in the whole of each test, and the utterances generated in the specific tasks within each test, too:

Figure 27. Number of utterances in existing public samples from Cambridge's YL (Movers) and Trinity GESE Grade 2 (Individual OPIs)

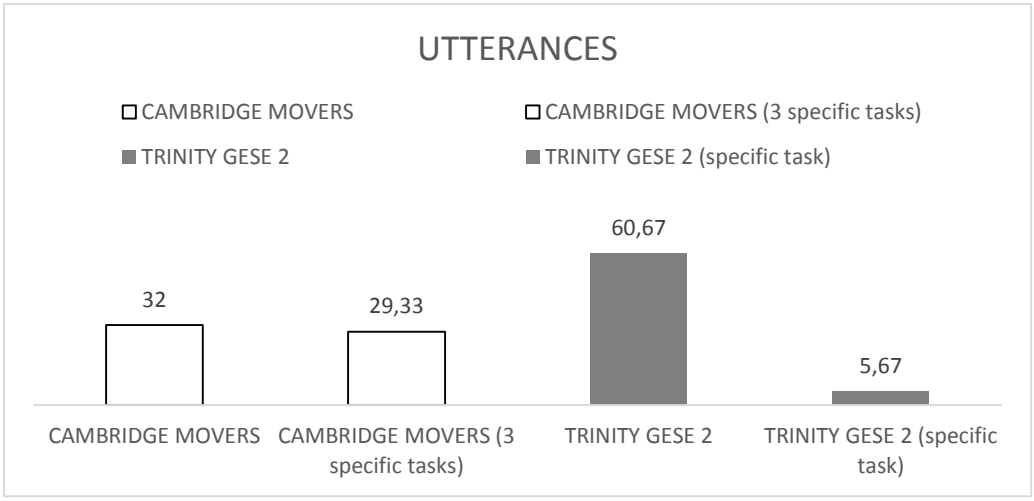


Figure 27 illustrates how both Movers and GESE Grade II generate noticeably more utterances than the ones obtained in the present study. However, a careful look at the table above highlights the fact that the proportion of such utterances is obtained through very different means, that is, the high output rate in GESE Grade II is more of a consequence of the high number of factual questions the learner is exposed to than a result of the candidate's expanding or initiating topics, as noted in the example below:

(51) Examiner: *How are you today?*
Student: ***I'm fine.***
Examiner: *Good! And what day is it today?*
Student: ***Today, today's erm… the 8th of May.***
Examiner: *And is it Tuesday?*
Student: ***No, today is Friday.***
Examiner: *Friday, ok. And when is your birthday?*
Student: ***My birthday is in the 5th of, erm… July, of July.***
Examiner: *Nice in the summer.*
Student: ***Yes, that's good.***
Examiner: *Yeah, and when is Christmas?*
Student: ***Christmas is on the 24th of… I don't remember, of December? (December)***
Examiner: *December.*
Student: ***December, yeah.***
(Trinity GESE Grade II – *Vojtech*)

As can be seen above, the student's output is nothing but the result of the direct, factual questions on the examiner's part, i.e., the test primarily relies on a barrage of questions as the main catalyst for the candidate's production, instead of directing their attention to any sort of specific (collaborative or not) task, even if such takes place between him/herself and

the examiner. According to this structure, the more the number of questions in the test, the more output generated. As can be seen in the table, the number of utterances in the specific task is minute (5,67 utterances), as illustrated in the following example:

(52) Examiner: *Alright, and let's look at some pictures here. Here are some people doing things. Are they playing tennis?*
Student: ***No, no they are, erm… ride a bicycle.***
Examiner: *And is she wearing a hat?*
Student: ***She them… moto?***
Examiner: *Ok. And is he driving a car?*
Student: ***No, the, no, he isn't. Erm… he is cooking?***
Examiner: *And is he singing?*
Student: ***Yes.***
Examiner: *Ok, thank you. Alright, and what's the name of your best friend in London?*

(Trinity GESE Grade II – *Ceren*)

Cambridge's Movers, on the other hand, relies on the tasks at hand to generate most of the candidates' output, although also resorts to a minimal number of introductory – seemingly warm-up - questions initially. It is worth reminding that such test relies on three different tasks within the same test, namely a spot-the-difference activity, a storytelling task and an odd-one-out exercise to reach such rate.

As a whole, these findings provide hope as for the capacity of children at this level to be able to perform conversations by themselves, autonomously, if given the chance by way of suitable tasks. Additionally, the task in the

present study proves to be a powerful tool that enables children students to generate a significant amount of language, i.e., noticeably more than individual specific tasks in the official tests from Cambridge's Movers and Trinity's GESE Grade II.

Duration

Figure 28 compares the average duration in child-expert interaction with that found in child-child exchanges (children D1T1 and D1T2 vs children D2T1 and D2T2):

Figure 28. Child-expert (Individual OPT) / Child-child (Paired OPT): duration

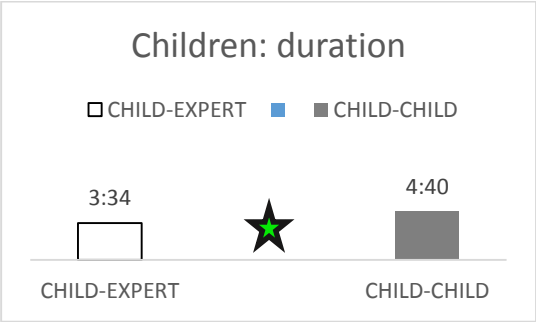


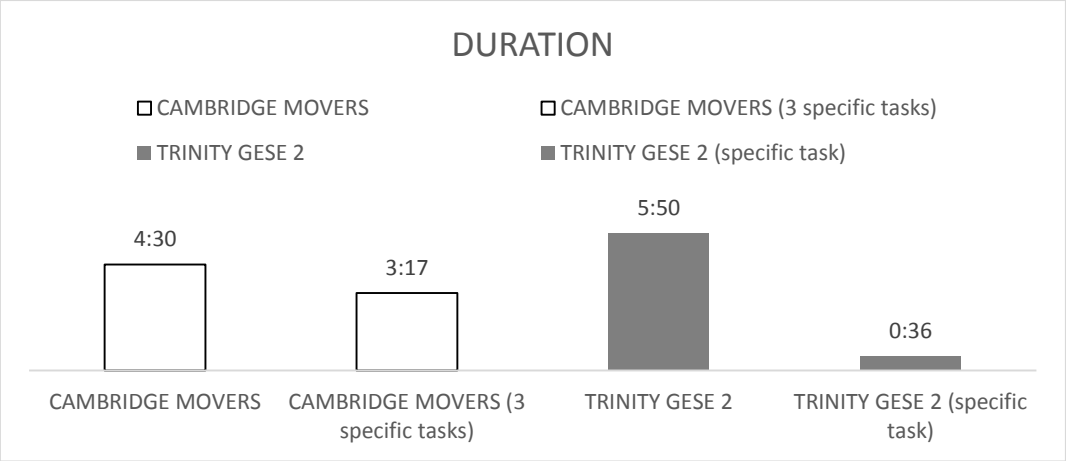
Figure 28 illustrates how it took children significantly more time to perform similar tasks when interacting with their peers (z= -3,286[b], p = 0,001). Explanations for this phenomenon could be twofold:

- The expert needed less time to tell the story when acting as a narrator, and the same applied regarding the time he needed to focus on the differences when building the story.

- It might be more cognitively demanding for children to articulate the story (narrators) but also to detect and enquire about the differences at hand (story builders).

The duration in existing public samples from Cambridge's YL (Movers) and Trinity GESE Grade 2 (Individual OPIs) can be seen in Figure 29. Again, we have bisected times into i) total time spent on the test and ii) time spent on the specific task(s) in those tests:

Figure 29. Duration in existing public samples from Cambridge's YL (Movers) and Trinity GESE Grade 2 (Individual OPIs)



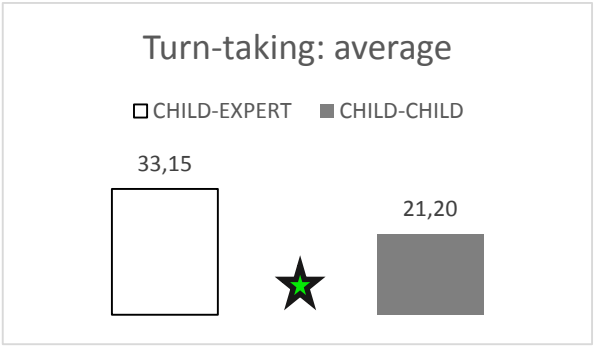
Average total times in both Cambridge's Movers and Trinity's GESE Grade II compare to our results in various ways. On the one hand, the total amount of time spent on each official test was higher than the duration times obtained in the individual format in our study. The paired format, however, yielded a slightly higher average time than that in Cambridge's test, yet still lower than the duration in Trinity's.

However, if we analyse the portion of time spent performing a specific task, i.e., other than answering canonical factual interview-style questions, times in both tests display substantially different results. This fact is highly relevant, since our study only included on-task interaction, i.e., the researcher's greetings, introduction and additional questions were not included in the data. Cambridge Movers' candidates spend most of their testing time dealing with specific tasks, such time being comparable to the one spent on the individual format in our study (3:17 in Cambridge's three tasks, and 3:34 in our study). By contrast, the test-takers analysed in Trinity's GESE Grade II spend as little as 36 seconds on average performing a specific task, i.e., 10,28% of all test time.

Turn taking patterns

Figure 30 displays the average number of turn-takes in child-expert interaction as well as the same parameter in child-child exchanges (children D1T1 and D1T2 vs children D2T1 and D2T2):

Figure 30. Child-expert (Individual OPT) / Child-child (Paired OPT): turn-taking



As noted in Figure 30, the average number of turn-takes was significantly higher in the individual format than in the paired one (z= -3,510 [b], p < .001). A closer look at the transcriptions reveals that turn-taking patterns were very similar, so the higher number of turns appears to be directly related to the increase in duration times, as the following extracts illustrate:

(53) Student A: *In the first picture dad, or grandpa, mmm… grandpa… is … in the car… driving and the children saw the toyshop.*
Student B: *Mmm… The boy is with the eyes open?*
Student A: *With the?*
Student B: *Eyes open.*
Student A: *Yes. And the girl. And dad. In the second they are on the… boots shop… and dad is looking… erm… yellow… a yellow boot, and the children are thinking in the toyshop. No quest, no question?*
Student B: *No.*

(Child-child)

Now compare the example above with the following example in which the same student (A) narrates the story to the expert:

(54) Student A: *In the first picture… two boys are playing in the floor with the snow… and next there is a grandpa sitting in a bank.*
Researcher: *Ok, what happens after that?*
Student A: *In the second picture the children… are doing a snowball… a snow…*
Researcher: *Yeah!*
Student A: *Yes.*
Researcher: *Is the girl making a bigger snowball?*
Student A: *Yes. In the third picture…*
Researcher: *Yes.*
Student A: *The children make a… a snow… (pause) doll.*

(Child-expert)

Note how the student behaves similarly with regard to turn-takes, i.e., his production is comparable in both cases, and variations might be down to the expert's higher use of listener-support moves via acknowledgements 'Yeah', 'Yes', which lead to an increase in the overall number or turn-takes, too [19].

The following Figure (31) compares turn-takes in Cambridge's Movers and Trinity's GESE Grade II. Again, they include results from the specific-task sections in each test, too:

Figure 31. Turn-takes in existing public samples from Cambridge's YL (Movers) and Trinity GESE Grade 2 (Individual OPIs)

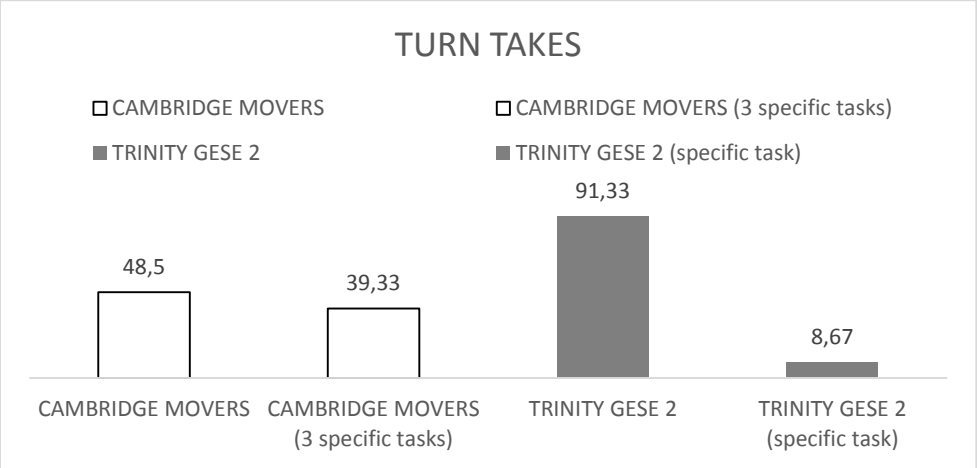


Figure 31 allows us to notice how the number of turn-takes in both tests is noticeably higher than that in the present study in either format, even more so in Trinity's GESE Grade II, which nearly doubles the average rate in

[19] This type of moves have been reported to be resorted to by students as they increase in proficiency (Galaczi, 2013).

Cambridge's Movers. Again, however, the proportion of turn-takes occurring while performing specific tasks comprised most of Cambridge's test, while the average turn-taking rate in Trinity's examination was comparatively very low (8,67 out of 91,33 on average).

Findings suggest, therefore, that an interview-based structure with a proficient expert (whose use of listener-support moves is predictably higher) almost 'mathematically' leads to a higher rate of turns (irrespective of the content and nature of the discourse generated). An interactional pattern frequent in those tests was one in which the examiner initiated all of the questions and students typically provided responses (often minimal) as in the example below: as the following example illustrates:

(55) 1.- Examiner: *Is he wearing a coat?*
2.- Student A: *I don't know.*
3.- Examiner: *And is he driving a car?*
4.- Student A: *No, he isn't, he is cooking.*
5.- Examiner: *Mmm… yes, ok, thank you. And do you have a question to ask me?*
6.- Student A: *For example?*
7- Examiner: *Ooo, anything.*
8.-Student A: *What time did you get up early?*
9.- Examiner: *Yes.*
10.- Student A: *Yes.*
11.- Examiner: *Uh… Today I got up quite late, I got up at 8:30 in the morning.*

(Trinity GESE Grade II – *Saliha*)

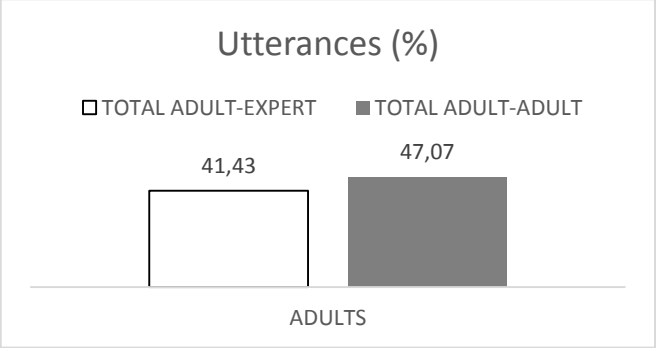
Note the shift on the examiner's part as he invites the candidate to fulfil one of the requisites in the exam, namely the formulation of a question in turn 5, something which appears stilted as it is completely disconnected to the previous subject matter: a description of some pictures. Note the role of the examiner as topic initiator – shifter, and the asymmetrical pattern displayed as he swerves the interaction unexpectedly in order to meet one of the exam's requirements: the formulation of a question.

The following results cover the amount of production, duration and turn-taking patterns of adults i) with an expert of English and ii) adult-adult interactions (D1T1 and D1T2, vs D2T1 and D2T2):

Amount of production

Figure 32 displays the average amount of production in adult-expert interaction as well as the same parameter in adult-adult interaction (adults D1T1 and D1T2 vs adults D2T1 and D2T2):

Figure 32. Adult-expert (Individual OPT) / Adult-adult (Paired OPT): amount of production

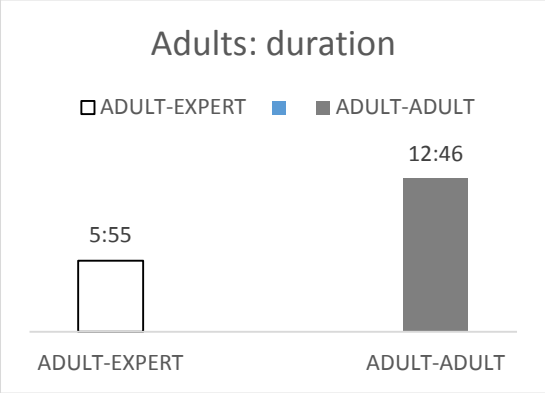


As observed in Figure 32, the amount of output generated in the paired format was higher than that found in adult-expert interaction, although the difference was not statistically significant (z= -0,440 [b], p = 0,660). According to these findings, therefore, even at a beginner A1 level, when adults interact with their peers they do not generate lower amounts of language –rather on the contrary- than they would generate interacting with an expert speaker of the TL.

Duration

Figure 33 includes the average duration in adult-expert interaction as well as the duration in adult-adult interaction (adults D1T1 and D1T2 vs adults D2T1 and D2T2):

Figure 33. Adult-expert (Individual OPT) / Adult-adult (Paired OPT): duration



As observed in the Figure above, it took adults longer to carry out the tasks in the interactive form than it did in the individual format, yet, in spite of the apparent divergence, such difference is not statistically significant (z= -1,758 [b], p = 0,079). It is pertinent to point out that, in general terms, adults appeared to need a slower speaking rate on the expert's part, a fact which might have affected average duration values.

Although there was a pre-estimated time for each task (4-10 minutes), the unpredictability (Luoma, 2009; McNamara, 1997; Weir, 2005) and variability (L. Brooks, 2009) inherent to interaction allowed for occasional time spans significantly exceeding initial estimations - the range included a minimum time on task of 3:37 for one dyad, whereas it took another pair as much as 17:46, while most students remained in the 5 to 8 minute bracket (see Appendix E – Participants: times-range). This turned out to be particularly noticeable in certain adult individuals, and even more so in the paired format.

As a result, we might infer that, in general terms, adults spend similar amounts of time performing these tasks when they do so with a partner or when they interact with an expert speaker of the TL, although individual differences (in our study students taking longer happened to be older in age) in this respect might be more noticeable in the paired format, i.e., adults who struggle to carry out the task might benefit more duration-wise when scaffolded by an expert speaker or teacher.

Turn-taking patterns

Figure 34 comprises the average number of turn-takes in adult-expert interaction as well as the same feature in adult-adult interaction (adults D1T1 and D1T2 vs adults D2T1 and D2T2):

Figure 34. Adult-expert (Individual OPT) / Adult-adult (Paired OPT): turn-taking

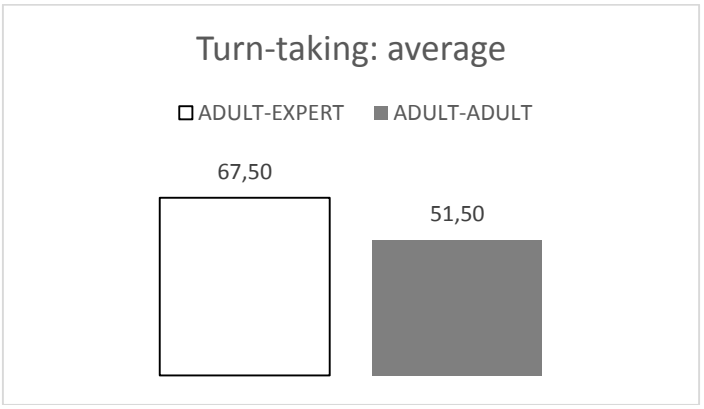


Figure 34 illustrates how the turn-taking rate was higher in the individual format, although not significantly (z= -1,783 [b], p= 0,075). This might have a connection with the listener-support moves displayed by the expert, mentioned in the 'Turn-taking patterns' in the children section above, although, as opposed to those, it did not have a significant impact in the case of adults.

3.2.4.2.Discussion of hypotheses: Addit. features of interaction

Hypothesis regarding additional features of interaction:

i. Duration, amount of production and turn-taking patterns in the paired OPT (children) will be comparable to those in the individual format and in the tests abovementioned.

This hypothesis was partly supported. On the one hand, it took children significantly more time to perform similar tasks when interacting with a peer, while adults did not seem to be affected by the interlocutor / interactive mode in this respect. This fact could be linked to the adults' higher cognitive maturity, i.e., with their ability to deal with the strategic side to the task at hand, that is, narrating and negotiating for meaning. Children were ultimately able to succeed in the tasks, yet needed more time to co-perform them jointly, perhaps due to their more egocentric, less mature characteristics.

Duration values for adult participants were nevertheless consistently longer than those in children. Even though we are not comparing both populations at this stage, some of the adults reported not being acquainted with this type of game-based activity, although there was unanimity as for their enjoyment of the tasks at hand.

On the other hand, both groups produced a similar amount of language irrespective of the interactive mode used. This fact allows us to think that,

even at this level, when provided with a suitable task, A1 students are capable of managing interaction successfully when doing so with their peers.

However, children's results in terms of output and duration were lower than the overall figures in Cambridge's Movers and Trinity's GESE Grade II, yet such a simple quantitative analysis might be deceptive: a more careful look reveals how, regarding specific on-task interaction, Cambridge's test resorts to three different tasks to achieve a higher output (average of 29,33 utterances in on-task interaction against 19,63 in the paired mode in our study), while Trinity's on-task interaction yielded an average of 5,67 utterances.

Regarding turn-taking patterns, rates were significantly higher in the child-expert mode, while adults also displayed higher figures (although not statistically significant) in the adult-expert interaction format. As explained above, this appears to be connected to a higher use of discourse markers, acknowledgments and listener-support moves on the expert's part, which seem to trigger a higher rate of shorter, quicker responses on both groups, more significantly so in the case of children.

Turn-taking rates were higher in Cambridge's and Trinity's tests than in the present study, yet there is more to this finding than meets the eye: the canonical interview format based on a sequence of factual questions has been revealed to yield *per se* a higher rate of turns at the expense of promoting asymmetrical interaction and often minimal responses, as illustrated in the

examples across this section. This points at the need to analyse such turn takes and production from a more detailed, qualitative perspective, since sole quantitative information might be deceptive in this respect.

The findings above are summarised graphically in the following tables:

Table 19. Child-expert / Child-child interactions. Additional features of interaction

CHILD-EXPERT / CHILD-CHILD INTERACTIONS		
STATISTICAL DIFFERENCE (Wilcoxon signed-rank test)	**SIGNIFICANT**	**NON-SIGNIFICANT**
Time	**z= -3,286 [b] *p* = 0,001** (higher in paired OPT)	
Amount of production		z= -0,342 [b] *p* = 0,732
Turn-taking	**z= -3,510 b p < .001** (higher in individual OPT)	

Table 20. Adult-expert / Adult-adult interactions. Additional features of interaction

ADULT-EXPERT / ADULT-ADULT INTERACTIONS		
STATISTICAL DIFFERENCE (Wilcoxon signed-rank test)	**SIGNIFICANT**	**NON-SIGNIFICANT**
Time		z= -1,758 b p = 0,079
Amount of production		z= -0,440 b p = 0,660
Turn-taking		z= -1,783 [b] *p* = 0,075

In conclusion, it seems both children and adults are perfectly capable of producing similar language samples in terms of the amount of discourse produced irrespective of the interactive mode in use. In this sense we could infer that, while children are known to often rely on adults to manage conversations for them (Scarcella & Higa, 1981), a suitable and effective task design might render the need for an expert 'guiding' conversation unnecessary.

Children's generally needing more time, and producing fewer turn-takes might partly have to do with the idea that even 10-11-year-old children are still not 'fully developed' as conversational partners, and that this might have an effect on their performance in speaking tasks (Halliday, 1975; Clark, 1978; Karmiloff-Smith, 1992; Romaine, 1984), i.e. it might be more closely linked to a cognitive constraint than to a purely language proficiency factor.

Summary

In the present chapter we have laid bare the results concerning the research questions posited in 2.1. We have analysed the main features of interaction traditionally observed in previous literature, i.e., NoM strategies (including more recent additions) and L1 influence, as well as less researched aspects such as specific age-related task tactics, in addition to further interactional traits of particular relevance to RQ2.

In spite of their intricacy and complexity, the findings in this Thesis allow us to state that there are significant differences and similarities between children and adults across the different interaction modes under study.

Likewise, the results regarding RQ2 extend the validity of the paired format to the lower levels of the CEFR (A1) for both populations, while providing hints and raising questions as to the particular characteristics of level-matched learners of different ages.

The results above will be further interpreted and put into context in the next chapter.

Chapter 4. CONCLUSIONS: PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS and LINES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The first aim of this thesis was to examine the features of interaction of level-matched A1 children and adults while performing the same tasks with a peer and with a proficient speaker. We did so by analysing their interactional patterns following previous classifications of conversational strategies and other more recent classifications (Lázaro & Hidalgo, 2017; Oliver, 1998) as well as the influence of their shared L1 (Spanish) in the shape of explicit L1 use, but also by way of structural transfer (Lázaro-Ibarrola & Hidalgo, 2017). In addition, we also investigated the idiosyncrasies of children and adults' interactions regarding the task-solving tactics deployed and their ability to complete the tasks successfully.

The second objective of the present dissertation was to evaluate the suitability and validity of the paired OPT format, i.e., peer-peer, for the oral proficiency of A1 EFL children and adults. Following Brooks (2009), we did so by analysing the features of interaction mentioned above, which were supplemented with additional aspects of the students' performance, namely duration, amount of output, and turn-taking patterns. In this second research question, results from the children were also compared with officially sanctioned samples from Cambridge's Movers test and Trinity's GESE Grade II.

In this final chapter we will re-examine the *raisons d'être* behind this dissertation and draw a synthesis of its major findings (Section 4.1). Also, the main pedagogical implications will be described (Section 4.2). Subsequently the most relevant limitations to the study will be expounded, and the chapter will come to an end suggesting some lines for further research (Section 4.3).

4.1.*CONCLUSIONS*

The major findings regarding negotiation for meaning strategies can be summarized by saying that children and adults produced similar levels of conversational adjustments when they interacted with their peers. By contrast, when interaction takes place with an expert, the gap between both populations is widened and adults resort to conversational adjustments significantly more than children. When looking at specific strategies, acknowledgement use, a strategy included in recent research (Lázaro Ibarrola & Hidalgo, 2017), was by far the most produced conversational adjustment in both populations at all times. Repetition rates were noticeably higher than those reported in previous EFL studies, and both groups coincided in self-repeating more in the peer-peer mode, while imitating their interlocutor's speech (other-repetition) when interacting with an expert.

As for L1 use, differences were very conspicuous between both age groups but also regarding L1 words vs. L1 structures. Explicit L1 use showed a stark contrast. While the adult group in the present study did reach significant rates of explicit L1 use (although there was high variability between individuals), children's L1 terms were almost inexistent, supporting children results by Lázaro-Ibarrola and Azpilicueta-Martínez (2015), and clashing with i) Pinter's (2006), whose results reported children producing more L1 words, and with previous studies in which low-proficiency learners in FL classrooms were found to resort to their L1 instead of using the TL

(Alegría de la Colina & García Mayo, 2009; DiCamilla & Antón, 2012; Tognini & Oliver, 2012). On the other hand, there was a common high degree of L1 structures seeping through the participants' English output (both groups) at all times, and values were always higher in the case of children.

Great differences also appeared when task-solving tactics were considered. Adults performed the tasks much more satisfactorily than children in terms of carrying out task-accomplishment-oriented interaction, in the same line as Pinter's (2006) results.

Regarding the analysis of the validity of the paired task for the assessment of oral proficiency, it was clear that all statistically significant differences regarding NoM strategies (with the exception of clarification requests in the adult group) included higher rates in the paired interactive mode. These results concur with those in Brooks (2009), revealing the co-construction of a more linguistically demanding performance than the interaction between students and experts. However, children were visibly more consistently benefited in this respect, since adults displayed an overall higher use of conversational adjustments (although not significant) in the individual mode.

The individual format led to statistically significant more other-repetition (both groups) than the paired format, while the latter triggered higher figures of self-repetition, although differences were not statistically

significant in this case. This might be hinting at a natural strategy shared by both populations, i.e., students imitating their expert interlocutor's language.

Findings regarding conversational adjustment rates in the present study compared with those in public samples from Cambridge's YL Movers and Trinity's GESE Grade II reveal an extremely low percentage in the last two (fully non-existent in Movers, except for the acknowledgements), supporting the notion that the discourse generated in those tests lacks important features of natural interaction.

While repetition rates were higher in Cambridge's Movers and Trinity's GESE Grade II, it seems the more constrained, tester-controlled interview-like structure in these tests (particularly Trinity's) leads examinees to provide fixed, factual answers containing some sort of repetition. This is further supported by the comparatively fewer instances of 'repetition' spotted in the task-specific sections in the Movers test.

The amount of L1 influence, coming into sight via explicit terms or indirectly by way of structural transfer, does not seem to be significantly affected by variations in the interaction format at hand, and seems to constitute a more permanent, less alterable trait of the students' interlanguage at this level (both populations).

While there was a noticeable increase in the deployment of task-related tactics and success rate on the paired format in both groups, such correlation seems to be also affected by participants repeating the tasks, i.e.,

there appeared to be a gradual increase in the degree to which both groups managed to succeed in them, and in the extent to which they performed specific task-solving tactics.

Children needed significantly more time to perform similar tasks when interacting with a peer, while adults seemed oblivious to changes in the interlocutor / interactive format in this respect (although it took children less time than the adults to perform the tasks). This suggests a connection with the adults' higher cognitive maturity, i.e., with their ability to deal with the strategic side to the task at hand, that is, narrating and negotiating for meaning.

Both groups produced a similar amount of language irrespective of the interactive mode used. This fact allows us to think that, even at this level, when provided with a suitable task, A1 students are capable of managing interaction successfully when doing so with their peers.

Children's results in terms of output and duration were lower than the total figures in Cambridge's Movers and Trinity's GESE Grade II. However, an analysis of the specific on-task interaction in those tests revealed a noticeable lower language-per-task ratio.

Turn-taking rates were significantly higher in the child-expert mode, while adults also displayed higher figures (although not statistically significant) in the adult-expert interaction format. Rates in Cambridge's Movers and Trinity's GESE Grade II were also higher than those in child-

child interaction. A closer look at the interactions has allowed us to note a higher use of discourse markers, acknowledgments and listener-support moves on the expert's part, which seem to trigger a higher rate of shorter, quicker responses on both groups, more significantly so in the case of children.

4.2.*PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS*

We will now attempt to provide a succinct overview of the implications derived from the findings in the present study from a functional pedagogical perspective.

Students at A1 are able to engage in paired interactive activities successfully through suitable tasks, and these can provide them with substantial FL learning opportunities via negotiation for meaning. This implication should have an impact on a number of ESL / EFL primary school contexts whose language practice seems to revolve around learners drilling and memorizing prefabricated expressions or working on pattern practice (Mitchell & Lee, 2003).

Explicit L1 use in the present study was remarkably low in the case of children and much more visible in the adult group. Contrasting results with previous studies (e.g., Pinter, 2006) hint at the possible impact of different instructional settings and teaching practices, as well as the influence of task-related factors (in Alegría de la Colina & García Mayo, 2009). Results in this dissertation have shown that L1 use was similar irrespective of the interaction format in both groups, a fact which should push those teachers and stakeholders refraining from interactive activities on the grounds that they lead to less TL use.

Given the findings in this thesis, we also believe indirect, non-explicit L1 influence should hold more specific weight within research in the field,

like recent studies have started to point out (Lázaro-Ibarrola & Hidalgo, 2017).

Both A1 children and adults appear to mimic a significant amount of language when they interact with an expert. While this fact might be hinting at a clear task-related effect, the implications of this phenomenon contribute to support the paramount importance of achieving high proficiency levels in the teaching professionals at this level.

One of the age-related differences to these students seems to lie in their ability to perform tasks successfully by way of specific task-solving strategies. The fact that adults clearly outperform children at this level (as in Pinter, 2006) hints at a cognitive (and probably social) –related factor, one which needs further research, and which differentiates learner characteristics within the same CEFR level.

This study has contributed to shed light on the suitability and validity of the paired format for the assessment of the oral proficiency of A1 EFL students. Such format included a significantly (children) wider range of interactional features than i) the same task with an expert and ii) existing official examinations, with the crucial advantage of facilitating SLA, while producing comparable amounts of output. Findings in adults are less conclusive, with higher NoM rates on either format, so more research in this field is still needed. We hope these findings will contribute to an update in traditional forms of oral assessment at the lower levels of the CEFR.

4.3.*LIMITATIONS AND LINES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH*

To sum up, this dissertation has contributed to draw a picture of the similarities and differences found in the interactions of EFL children and adults at level A1 of the CEFR. It has also shed light on the use of the paired OPT format, i.e., *peer-peer*, as a layout for the assessment the oral proficiency of A1 EFL children and adults. However, there are several limitations, which, to a different degree, should be taken into account when analysing the findings of the study, in particular those limitations relating to the procedure followed when implementing the tasks.

First of all, there is the fact that the language the expert used on D1T1 (expert-narrator) might have influenced the production of the participants as narrators in subsequent tasks. When developing the interlocutor frame (see Appendix C), a decision had to be taken as for the extent of the input the students were provided with. We believed that a larger amount of input (i.e., a detailed description of the pictures on the expert's part) entailed risks such as making the need for NoM unnecessary, or even 'daunting' the students by the expert's language when narrating and therefore having participants taking it for granted that such level was expected from them when narrating. With the trade-off reached through the interlocutor frame chosen, co-interaction was stimulated, yet it is feasible that not all of them might have always provided as much information as possible when acting as narrators.

On the other hand, the expert letting participants know which picture was wrong (re-checks) when they made mistakes might have possibly led to lower amounts of NoM than if such information had been omitted, that is, participants would have had to re-check every single picture in order to spot out what was wrong. However, the piloting carried out the year before data collection revealed that such procedure yielded, occasionally, disproportionally long interactions, and was discarded due to time constraints and practicality of administration.

In D1T2 – in which the expert took on the 'story builder' role, he knew all the information regarding picture differences beforehand. Notwithstanding this, he feigned he did not remember it and focussed on the information provided by the narrators to carry out his part of the task and asked the corresponding questions if such information was lacking or inaccurate. While this did not seem to have any apparent effect on the students' performance, it is undeniable that some adults were aware of this fact and the pseudo-contingency inherent to role-play interaction was somehow present in this interactive mode.

In some cases, if the description of the second picture in D2T2 was carried out comprehensively by the narrator ('daddy is looking at a book at the bookshop while the children are ***thinking of the toyshop'***), it might not have been necessary for the story builder to ask for confirmation or negotiate for meaning in many students:

(56) Student B: *Second, please.*
Student A: *Then, the… they… are in the… in the… in the… in the… in a… a…*
Student B: *They're the…*
Student A: *At the…*
Student B: *Shoe shop or?*
Student A: ***Sho, sh, shoe, shoe… shop and the bo, the two boys are… are… bored thinking in the toyshop.***
Student B: *Third, please.*

The children participating in the study did not know the expert could speak Spanish. While they were not told he could not, they never saw him interact in Spanish, and might have assumed he would not understand any language other than English. This might have also had its drawbacks. If this were true, that might have impinged on their explicit L1 use and triggered a higher use of roundabout expressions or L1 avoidance. In order to maximise TL use by the students, the usual response from the expert when asked to translate a given term was to pretend to misunderstand the speaker. This fact might cause a decline in the number of translation requests on the subjects' part. In fact, in one case did the researcher answer one of those questions and that appeared to trigger a higher number of translation requests – and, perhaps, to a lower effort to convey meaning using their own English words - within that dyad:

(57) Student A: *In the… in the… **how do you said… 'carro'** (trolley) (looking at researcher)?*
Researcher: *Trolley?*
Student A: *In the trolley?*
Student B: *No.*
Student A: *Where?*
Student B: ***How do you say 'detrás'** (behind)'? (looking at researcher)*
Student A: *Behind.*
Student B: *Behind the children.*
Student A: *Breads.*
Student B: *Ah…*
Student A: *In the third picture, in the fourth picture there, there are in the bookshop, the dad is reading a book and the two childrens are… erm… **how do you say 'agotados'** (drained)?*

At a more physical level, people with sight problems (some adults) might have struggled to notice the differences in D2T1 picture 1 and its distracter (see Appendix B). On one occasion did one adult participant forget her spectacles at home on D2 and reported having found it hard to spot some of the differences.

More generally, obviously, we would also need larger pools of participants to make our findings more robust, as well as participants with different L1 backgrounds, younger or older children, etc.

We would also like to describe some related lines for further research. Most studies focussing on the ratings of paired or group orals tend to focus on the relationship between scores and learner characteristics (e.g., Berry, 1997a; Iwashita, 1996; Norton, 2005; B. O'Sullivan, 2002). Hence, it would

be interesting to rate the samples obtained in this thesis using independent examiners and comparing individual vs paired performances as well as the rates obtained in relation to the features of interaction generated. In other words, to find out whether subjects showing a wider range of NoM features were awarded greater rates.

Analysing the impact of task repetition on performance and comparing it to similar children (Pinter, 2007) and adult studies (F. B. Brooks, Donato, & McGlonem, 1997; Lynch & Maclean, 2000; Platt & Brooks, 1994; Plough & Gass, 1993) would be of special interest.

Regarding task-solving strategies, performing the same tasks in reverse interaction-mode order, i.e., peer-peer first and student-expert later, would help ascertain the extent to which the increase in task-solving tactics in the present study was down to their different layout or was related to familiarity with the task itself.

It would be highly interesting to re-code the same data in terms of i) Negotiation of form and ii) Negotiation of content, and compare results with those in Van den Branden (1997).

A study on interaction by Eckerth (2009) showed that, "if one learner dominated one dyadic exchange with respect to one of the three investigated parameters – language production, negotiation of input, modification of output−s/he would dominate all exchanges with respect to this very parameter" (Eckerth, 2009, p. 121). It would be highly interesting to ascertain

whether (and the extent to which) this finding also applied to participants in the present study.

A study by Carpenter et al (1995) with 5-to-10-year-old English-speaking children learning Japanese in an immersion programme found, among other things, that 'young children typically required a much longer warm-up period than adults, and that attractive concrete physical objects helped motivate them to talk more readily' (Carpenter et al., 1995, p. 165). More research would be needed in order to check the extent to which such 'warm-up' period might lead to a wider spectrum of language in EFL children, such as the ones in the present dissertation.

The same study by Carpenter et al, as do Cambridge with their Young Learners exams, for example, makes use of an 'usher' figure, i.e., someone known to the learners, in order to guide them to the room where the tasks are going to take place and introduce them to their interlocutor. In Carpenter et al's the usher spoke the students' mother tongue, in order them to build a TL-only relationship with the examiner, so as to minimize the temptation of resorting to their L1. It could be interesting to assess to what degree this procedure might be effective in paving the way for richer language samples as a result of lower anxiety levels.

As a final line for further research, we would like to provide a critical view of the literature on interaction that we have built in light of our findings. We perceive that the *de rigueur* categorizations of NoM strategies, such as

that by Oliver (1998) might, if taken in isolation, divert the attention from other equally relevant aspects of interaction whose analysis, in our opinion, helps to obtain a more thorough description and understanding of conversational interaction in relation to language acquisition. In our reckoning, including the analysis of more aspects into interaction studies in general (such as transfer, tactics, success rates, strategies, etc.) in addition to the analysis of all those "ad-hoc" aspects that might emerge from a specific task performed by specific learners, could reduce the risk of missing out features that really characterise the interactions of a group of speakers. For instance, the proliferation of acknowledgements to the detriment of comprehension checks in the present study pushes us to suggest their inclusion in subsequent NoM categorizations while, at the same time, it suggests that the absence of comprehension checks is not necessarily a sign of egocentricity and lack of interest towards their partner, as had been previously suggested, since such interest was present by way of the learners' constant use of acknowledgments.

To finish, we would like to say that, as attested in the present study, oral interactions provide such a rich environment for language use that, going back to the question that originated the present study – "*What happens when learners talk to one another?"*- we may answer the following –"*A great deal of things",* all of which contribute to set the language acquisition process in motion.

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APPENDICES
APPENDIX A – KET & KET FOR SCHOOLS ORAL TEST

KET

Part 2 3 - 4 minutes (Prompt card activity)

Prompt cards are used to stimulate questions and answers of a non-personal kind. The interlocutor reads out instructions and gives a question card to one candidate and an answer card to the other. After the candidates have asked and answered questions, they change roles, as in the example below.

Example

The interlocutor reads out these instructions and gives a question card to Candidate B and an answer card to Candidate A.

Candidate A, here is some information about a museum.
Candidate B, you don't know anything about the museum,
so ask A some questions about it. Now B, ask A your questions
about the museum and A, you answer them.

Candidate A - your answers. ***Candidate B - your questions.***

SANDON AIR MUSEUM

More than 70 aeroplanes to look at
OPEN DAILY 10 am – 6 pm
Shop with books and postcards
Large free car park

Tickets: Adults £8.00
Students £5.00

MUSEUM

- what / see?
- open / weekends?
- student ticket? £ ?
- car park?
- buy / postcard?

There is a variety of acceptable questions which may be produced using this material. For example:

What can I see at the museum?
Is it open at the weekend?
How much is a student ticket?
Is there a car park?
Can I buy a postcard there?

38

The examiner will stop the interaction after 4 or 5 questions have been asked and answered. A different set of prompt cards is then given out, so that Candidate A has the opportunity to ask questions and Candidate B to answer them. In this example, the questions are about a library.

Candidate B, here is some information about a bookshop. Candidate A, you don't know anything about the bookshop, so ask B some questions about it. Now A, ask B your questions about the bookshop and B, you answer them.

Candidate B - your answers.

WORLD BOOKS
212 Main Street

Largest bookshop in the country

Get your travel books here

Monday – Saturday 10.00 am – 8.00 pm
Sunday 12.30 pm – 8.00 pm

Tel: 724 399

Candidate A - your questions.

BOOKSHOP

- address ?
- big / small ?
- closed / Sundays ?
- sell / travel books ?
- telephone number ?

Key English Test for Schools
Speaking Test

Part 1 5-6 minutes

In this part of the Speaking test, each candidate interacts with the interlocutor, using the language normally associated with meeting people for the first time, giving factual information of a personal kind, for example, name, place of origin, study, family, etc. Candidates are also expected to be able to talk about their daily life, interests, likes, etc.

Part 2 3 – 4 minutes (Prompt card activity)

Prompt cards are used to stimulate questions and answers of a non-personal kind. The interlocutor reads out instructions and gives a question card to one candidate and an answer card to the other. After the candidates have asked and answered the questions, they change roles, as in the example below.

Example

The interlocutor reads out these instructions and gives a question card to Candidate B and an answer card to Candidate A.

> **Candidate A, there is some information about a skateboarding competition. Candidate B, you don't know anything about the skateboarding competition, so ask A some questions about it. Now B, ask A your questions about the skateboarding competition and A, you answer them.**

Candidate A – your answers

Skateboarding Competition
for anyone 11 – 15 years old

at
Green **Park**
20 June

1st prize
New Skateboard
visit www.citynews.com for more information

Candidate B – your questions

Skateboarding Competition

- where ?
- for children ?
- date ?
- website ?
- what / win ?

There is a variety of acceptable questions which may be produced using this material. For example:

Where is the competition?
Is the competition for children?
What date is it?
Is there a website address?
What can you win?

The examiner will stop the interaction after 4 or 5 questions have been asked and answered. A different set of prompt cards is then given out, so that Candidate A has the opportunity to ask questions and Candidate B to answer them. In this example, the questions are about a theatre school.

Candidate B, here is some information about a theatre school. Candidate A, you don't know anything about the theatre school, so ask B some questions about it. Now A, ask B your questions about the theatre school and B, you answer them.

Candidate B – your answers

"Lenny Grade"

Theatre School
22 High Street

We'll teach you to act, sing and dance!

Classes 3 to 5 p.m. Every Saturday

Fee: £35 a month

Visit: www.theatre.com

Candidate A – your questions

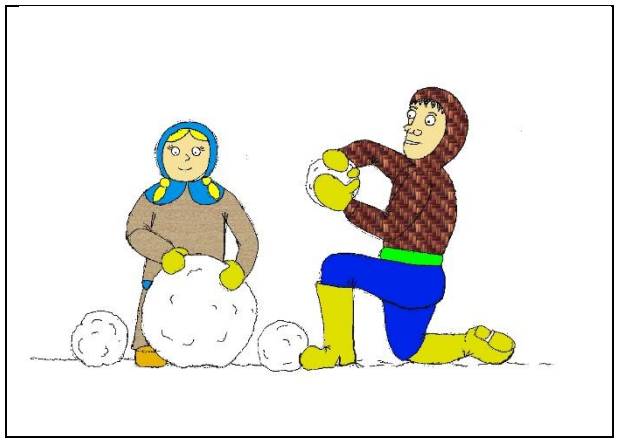
Theatre school

- name / school ?
- what / learn ?
- when / classes ?
- cost ?
- address ?

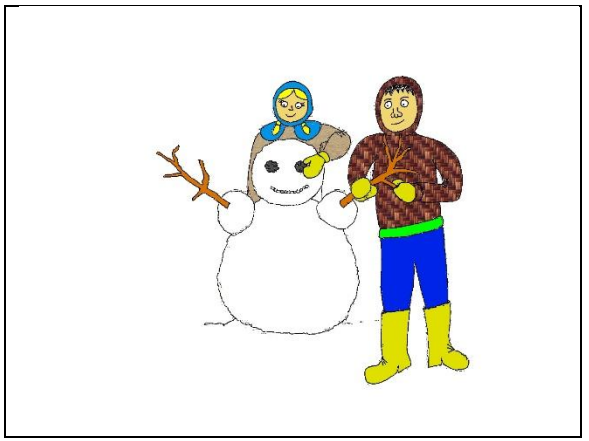
APPENDIX B – TASKS AND DISTRACTERS

D1T2
Narrator's view:

1

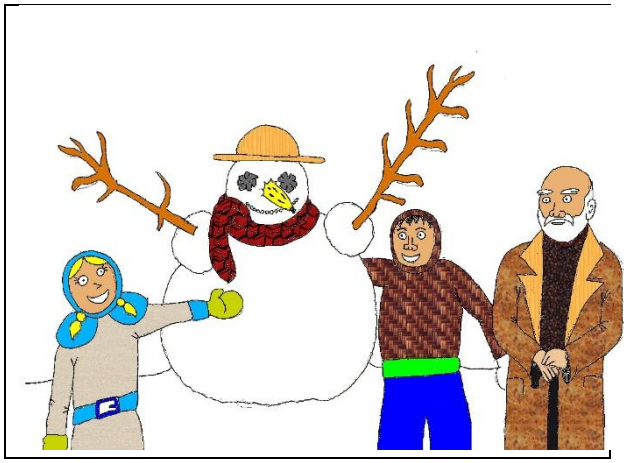


2



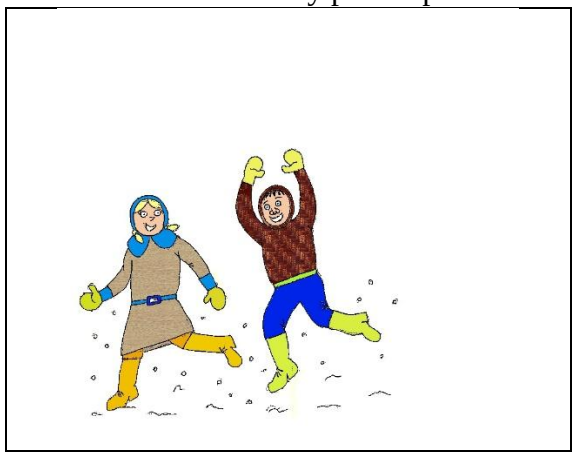
3

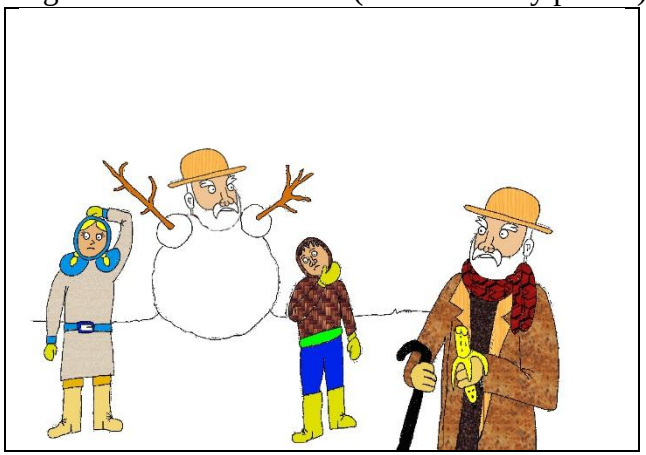
4

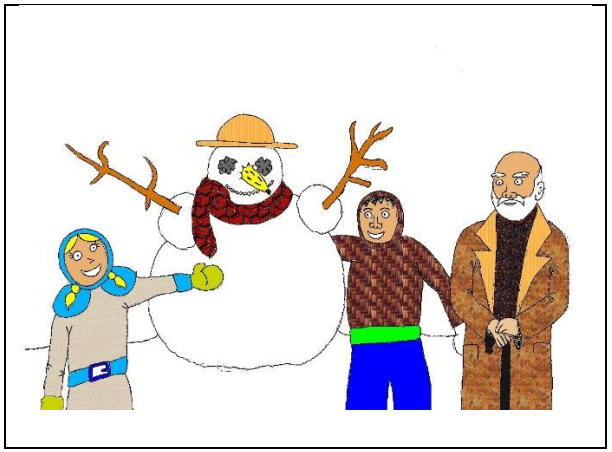


5

Storybuilder's view:
Pictures above randomly placed plus the following distracter illustrations (also randomly placed):



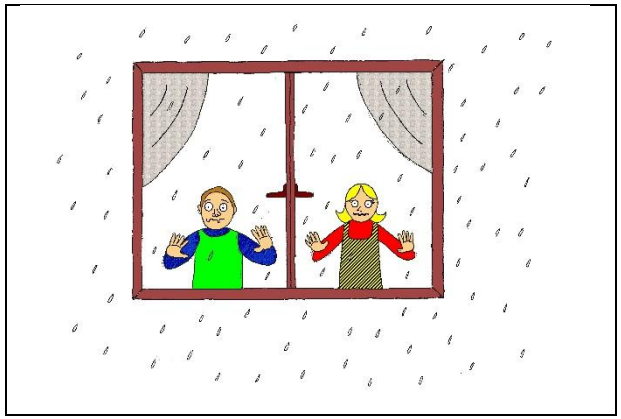




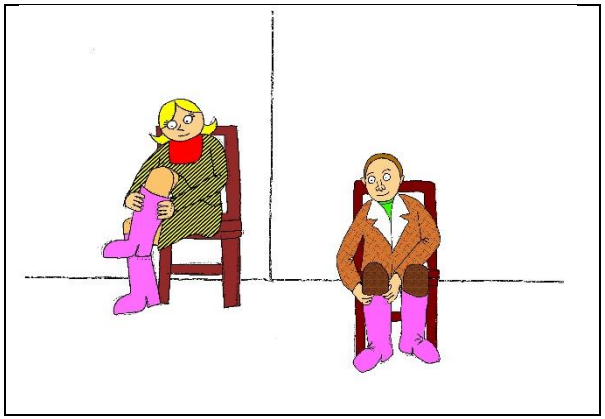
- D1T2[20]
    - **Item 2:** Children are making snowballs.
        - ***Distracter***: Children are frolicking in the snow.
    - **Item 4:** The snowman is unfinished.
        - ***Distracter***: The unfinished snowman's head looks the same as the old man's.
    - **Item 5:** The snowman is finished.
        - ***Distracter***: The finished snowman's arms are short.

20 Distracter items in this task were irrelevant, because it was the researcher who was acting as the story builder.

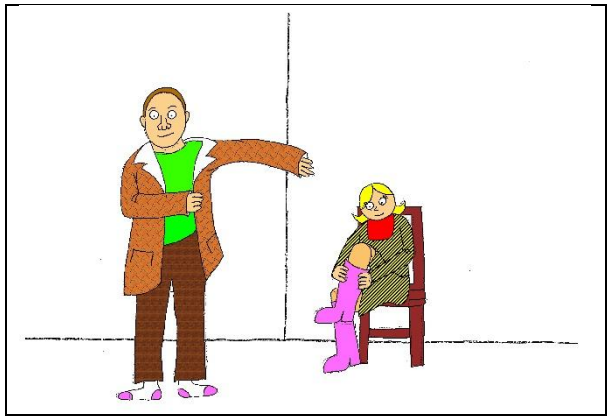
D2T1
Narrator's view:



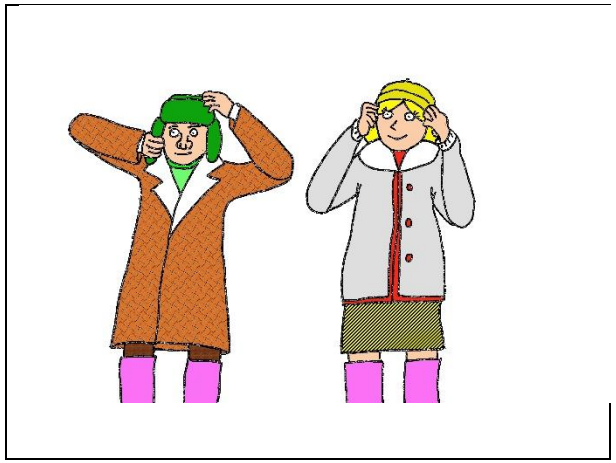
1



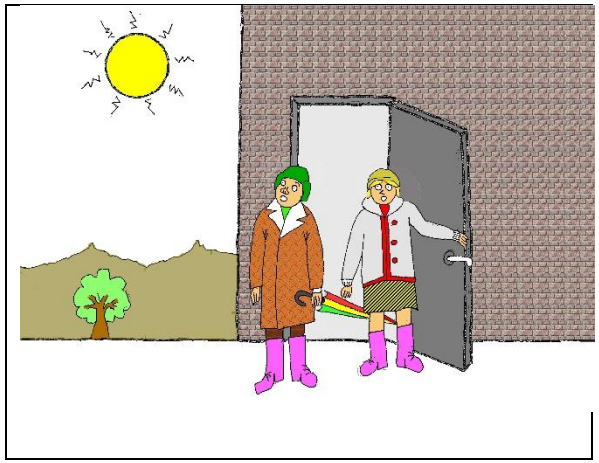
2



3



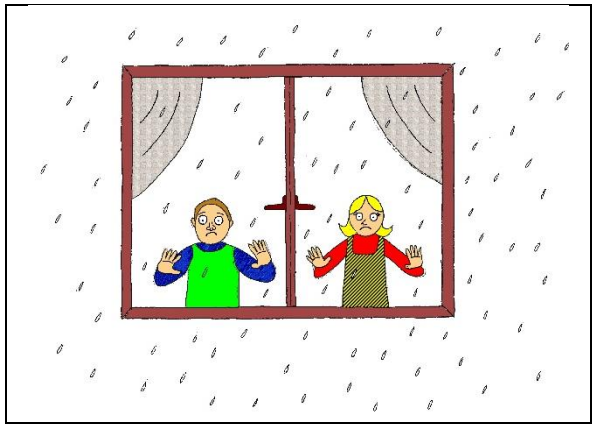
4

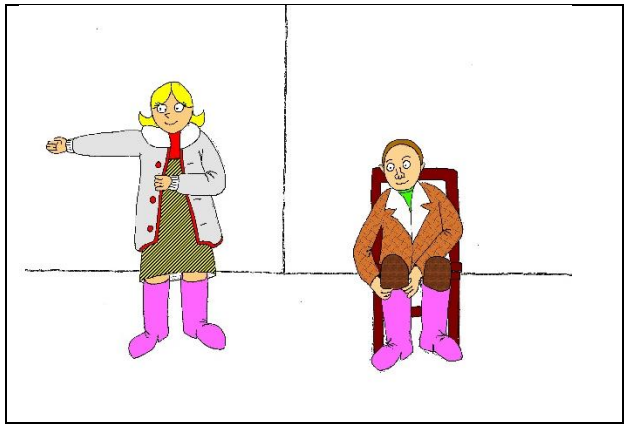


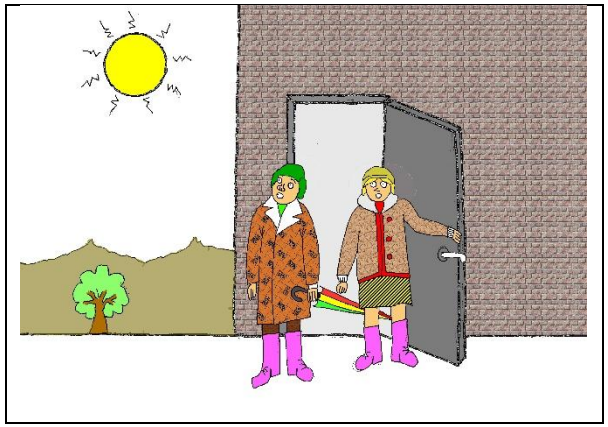
5

Storybuilder's view:

Pictures above randomly placed plus the following distracter illustrations (also randomly placed):







- D2T1
    - **Item 1:** A young couple are gazing out of the window looking intrigued.
        - ***Distracter***: The young couple look sad rather than intrigued.
    - **Item 2:** The young couple are sitting while they put on their wellington boots.
        - ***Distracter***: The man in the young couple is sitting while putting on his wellingtons, but the woman is standing and putting on her coat.

- **Item 5:** The young couple are clad in rain garb only to learn it is sunny as they open the door.
  - ***Distracter***: The young man's coat is spotty, as opposed to the plain one in the original item 5.

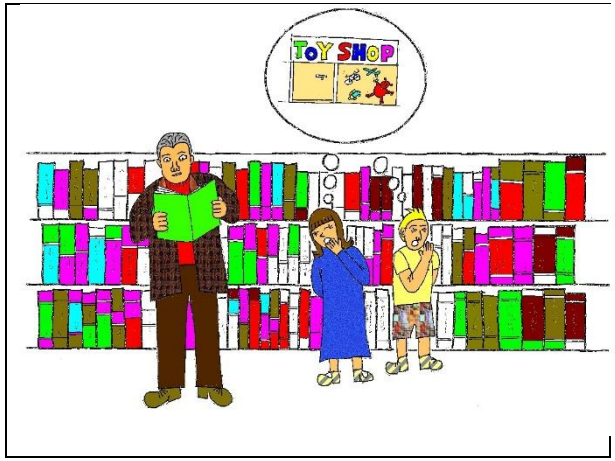
D2T2

Narrator's view:

1

2

3



4

5

Storybuilder's view:

Pictures above randomly placed plus the following distracter illustrations (also randomly placed):

- D2T2
  - **Item 2:** While the father is considering buying some boots at a shoe shop, his children are thinking about going to the toyshop.
    - ***Distracter***: The children are thinking about a sandwich rather than on the toyshop.
  - **Item 3:** While their father is getting something from the supermarket shelf in order to place it on the shopping trolley, the children are thinking of the toyshop.
    - ***Distracter***: The girl is between the father and the boy, while the original item 3 shows the boy between the father and the girl.

- **Item 5:** As the father drives past the toyshop, the children are visibly sound asleep (including ‘z’ signs over their heads) on the rear seats.
    - ***Distracter***: The children are wide awake: there are no ‘z’ signs and their eyes are wide open.

APPENDIX C – INTERLOCUTOR FRAME (D1T1)

Identical instructions provided to all participants[21]:

- *Here you are some 8 pictures* (display pictures). *Take a look at them* (allow some seconds).
- *I'm going to tell you a story. You have to put the pictures next to the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 as you hear them. You can ask as many questions as you like if you are not sure. Shall I start?*
- *Picture 1: There are two girls having fun. They're playing with a doll. The doll is in the cot. They're celebrating a birthday party.*
- *Picture 2: The girls are jumping happily because mum has brought them a cat.*
- *Picture 3: The children are playing with the cat on the floor. The place is full of balloons!*
- *Picture 4: The girls are now looking for the cat. They cannot seem to find it!*
- *Picture 5: Oh look at it! It was sleeping on the cot all the time!*

Additional feedback provided depending on the students' output and attitude:

- *"Do you want me to repeat?"*
- *"No questions?"*

Feedback provided when students failed to perform the task well fully:

- "*Ok: picture 'X' is not correct. Shall I repeat picture 'X' (student's name)?*

Feedback provided when students finished the task successfully:

- *"Excellent / Well done / Brilliant / Fantastic"*

[21] Descriptions for each picture were repeated as many times as demanded by each subject.

APPENDIX D – SURVEY

CURSANDO NIVEL:

Nombre:
Apellidos:
Edad:

- **¿Sientes que ha sido muy importante la familiaridad con el formato/con el tipo de actividad?**

1. No, la actividad era intuitiva y la encontré fácil desde el primer momento.
2. La actividad me pareció intuitiva pero, a medida que la he repetido, siento que la hago ligeramente mejor.
3. Sí, ha sido importante conocer el tipo de prueba para poder hacerla bien.
4. Absolutamente necesaria; la primera vez no entendía qué había que hacer y no me desenvolví bien.

- **¿En qué diálogo crees que has interactuado más?**
    1. Con Raúl
    2. Con mi compañero/a

- **¿Por qué?**

- **En una escala del 1 al 4, ¿cómo valoras la dificultad de la actividad (1: muy fácil; 4: muy difícil):**

    1.
    2.
    3.
    4.

APPENDIX E – PARTICIPANTS: TIMES - RANGE

Figure 35. Children-adults: average duration

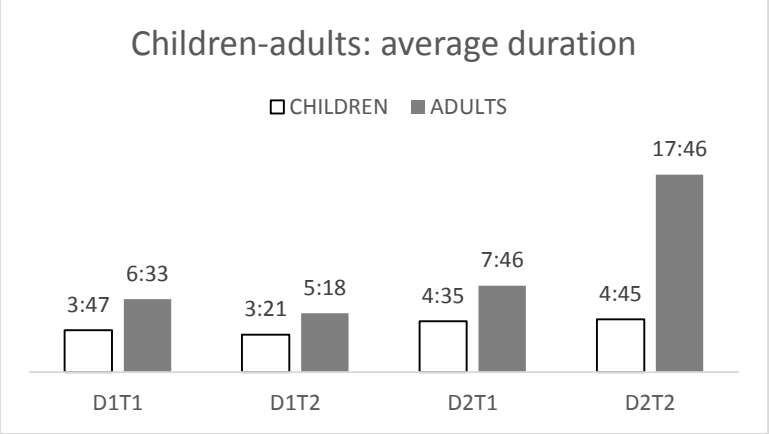


Figure 36. Children-adults: range (max)

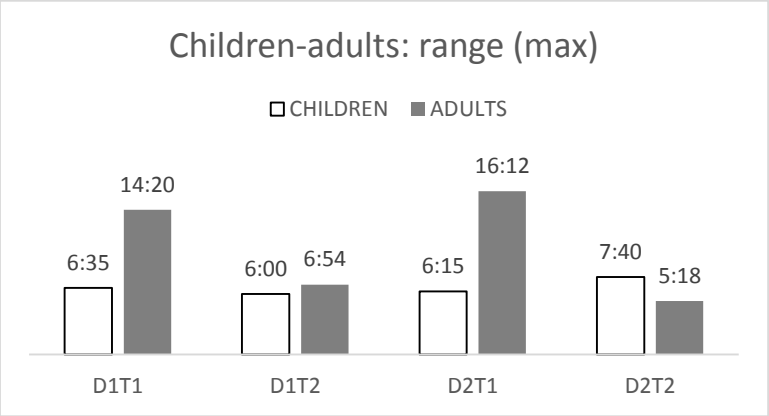
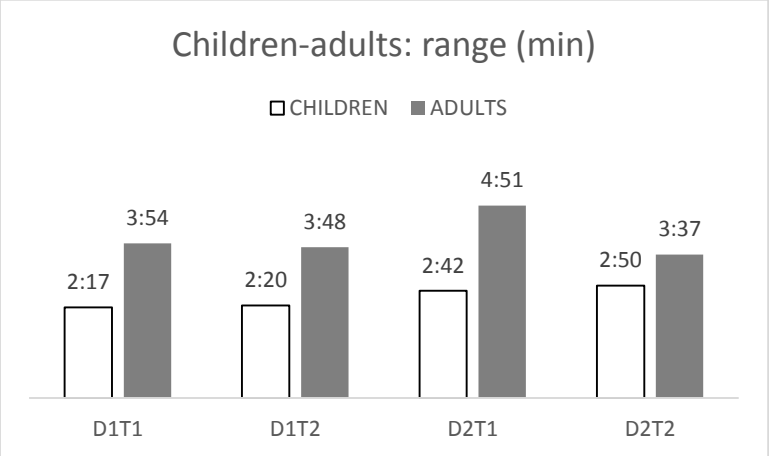


Figure 37. Children-adults: range (min)



APPENDIX F – SAMPLE DYADS

CHILD-CHILD D2T1
TIME: 4:58

Researcher's introduction: *"(Student A's name), I'm going to show you some pictures, and now (Student B's name) is going to tell you a story. You may ask (Student B's name) as many questions as you like, ok?"*

1. Student B: *Can I start?*
2. Student A: *Yes.*
3. Student B: *Here two, two boys, one girl, one girl and two, and one boy, is raining and he, he looking of the window.*
4. Student A: *Erm… the… are two pictures… are two pictures the same. One, the… first picture it ha, the boy it's sad and the girl is sad, and the second is with the… with the… with the mouth a little bit… erm… a little bit… straight.*
5. Student B: *Yes, is that.*
6. Student A: (Talking to himself) *This?*
7. Student B: *The… second.* (pause). *The… the second picture is that the boy is put – ting, two bo, two boots* (pron. '*bots'*).
8. Student A: *The boy?*
9. Student B: *Purple.*
10. Student A: *The boy… putting?*
11. Student B: *And the girl she puts a… a* (unintelligible)…
12. Student A: *There are sitting, there are two pictures, they are sitting on, on, they are sitting on the… chair or… the… girl… are sitting on the chair or the boy and the girl are sitting on… on the chair?*
13. Student B: *The boy and the girl is sitting an the chair.*
14. Student A: *Mmm… Continue* (pron. /kəntɪnʊˈiː/).
15. Student B: *The, the boy put… a…* (pause)
16. Student A: *A?*
17. Student B: *A jacket.*
18. Student A: *Aha…*
19. Student B: *And the dad* (unint.) *with the boots* (pron. 'bots').
20. Student A: (Muttering to himself) *A jacket, a jacket. A ver* (Spanish *'Let me see'*)… *This. Continue* (pron. /kəntɪnʊˈiː/)?
21. Student B: *The, the boy is putting a hat…*
22. Student A: *A hat?*
23. Student B: *Green. And the girl is putting a hat yellow.*
24. Student A: *Aha… Continue* (pron. /kəntɪnʊˈiː/).?
25. Student B: *The… the boy, the girl and the boy is… is… is out… and the sun is… in the… is up.*

26. Student A: *Are two pictures… erm… are…are the same pictures. No, the girl is, the girl is wearing a… white jacket with… circle* (pron. ‘saɪrkl), *with circles* (pron. ‘saɪrkls’) *red, and the…*
27. Student B: *Yes, is that.*
28. Student A: *And the boy wearing… I finished.*

CHILD-CHILD D2T2
TIME: 6:15

Researcher’s introduction: *“Now, (Student A’s name), you have this story, and (Student B’s name), you have this pictures. (Student A’s name, you tell the story now.”*
Student A: *Can I start?*
Researcher: *Ask* (Student B’s name)…

1. Student A: *Can I start*, (Student B’s name)*?*
2. Student B: *Yes.*
3. Student A: *Erm… there is a car… there is a car with a man… erm… with… with hair…(pause) erm… there are two… there is a boy, there’s a boy and a girl in the car… the boy is wearing a yellow, a yellow shirt, a yellow T-shirt, and the girl is wearing a blue… T-shirt.*
4. Student B: *They are sleeping?*
5. Student A: *Mmmm….No.*
6. Student B: *In the car?*
7. Student A: *No.*
8. Student B: *Continue.*
9. Student A: *They are pointy… the first… there are pointing to the toyshop in the first. Erm…* (Pause)*, the fa… their father… can I continue?*
10. Student B: *Yes!*
11. Student A: *The… Their father are… Their father it has a… one thing yellow is in his hand and… the…. And the… and the boy and the girl are… are thinking to the toyshop.*
12. Student B: *Ok, continue.*
13. Student A: *Erm… the father has a… ay, how I said…? This… He has… erm… erm… he has a red think with… to put o… to put all the things that he need to… to…*
14. Student B: *The… The… the children are…*
15. Student A: *A little bit seep… sleepy, and… and…*
16. Student B: *And you repeat?*
17. Student A: *The… the father have a… red thing that he need to put all the thing: the food, and the cereals… erm… the… children are a little bit sleepy and there are thinking to the toyshop. The father, erm… has a book, b… a book green on his hands… and the…*

children… are… sleeping… (Pause) *and the… and the… how are the… and they're thinking to the toyshop…*

18. Student B: *Is the third?*
19. Student A: *Yeah; no, the fourth. The fourth.*
20. Student B: *You can repeat the third, please?*
21. Student A: *Yes. The fa, the fa, the father has a red thing in his hand that need, that he need to put all the fruit and cereals, and the children are slepping a little bit, and they thinking to the toyshop.*
22. Student B: *The /tʃil/, the girl is in the left?*
23. Student A: *Left? Erm… no. In the left no. In the left? Yes, yes, in the left.*
24. Student B: *Ok.*
25. Student A: *Umm… A ver. No, is in the right.* (Pause). *In the fourth, the father is…*
26. Student B: *Wait.* (Student A's name): *the girl is… with her father?*
27. Student A: *In the, in the third?*
28. Student B: *Yes.*
29. Student A: *No.*
30. Student B: *The boy?*
31. Student A: *Yes*. (unint) *the boy, and they are thinking to the toyshop.*
32. Student B: *Ok, ok, continue…*
33. Student A: *In the fourth the father has a green book and the children are a little bit sleepy, and they are doing this* (pretends to yawn)
34. Student B: *Ok, ok, ok, continue.*
35. Student A: *And they are thinking to the, and they are thinking to the toyshop.*
36. Student B: *Ok.*
37. Student A: *And, and the girl is in the…Erm…*
38. Student B: *Yes, yes… I've* (unint)
39. Student A: *Is in the… is in the…left. Then they go to the car and they are sleeping in the car, and, and… and they are… very sleepy and the father… mmm… and the father is… and the father… Ay! … the father… and the… and they pass to the toyshop and the are sleepy and they don't go to the toyshop. Finished.*

ADULT-ADULT D2T1
TIME: 5:46

Researcher's introduction: *"(Student A's name), I'm going to show you some pictures, and now (Student B's name) is going to tell you a story. You may ask (Student B's name) as many questions as you like, ok?"*

1. Student A: *Ya* (Eng. '*now*').
2. Student B: *Bueno* (Eng. '*well*'), *the first.*
3. Student A: *The first.*
4. Student B: *Erm…. Is running.*
5. Student A: *Running.*
6. Student B: *And girl and boy, erm… They are, there are… They are…. They are in… In the… window.*
7. Student A: *Mmm.*
8. Student B: *Her… Your hands in the window… Pegadas* (Eng. '*stuck*')
9. Student A: *Erm… They are… erm… Hungry? Hungry no sé si es* (Eng. '*I don't now if it is this*'). *The mouth* (pron. '*moath*'), *the mouth is… Erm… Smile*?
10. Student B: *Erm… no.*
11. Student A: *No. There are the… Viendo cómo* (Eng. '*Seeing how*')…
12. Student B: *There are erm… curtains* (pron. '*coortains*') *in the windows?*
13. Student A: *Sí, sí* (Eng. '*yes*'), *yes. The only different is the mouth.*
14. Student B: *Ah, erm… erm…they have, they have, erm…*
15. Student A: *The bo… triste* (Eng. '*sad*') *Sad? Or, or…*
16. Student B: *Smile? No.*
17. Student A: *No. Es que la* (Eng. '*the fact is that…*') *smile…*
18. Student B: *The second?*
19. Student A: *No, porque es que… la…es que, son las dos, a ver.* (Eng. *'because the thing is that… is that… both of them are, let's see')*
20. Student B: *Ah…*
21. Student A: *The mouth…*
22. Student B: *The dress or… the clothes? Clothes?*
23. Student A: *No. Only the mouth. The mouth is not smile, but, … is… no sé si se pueden hacer gestos* (Engl. *'I don't know if we are allowed to show facial expressions). The, the….* (showing zigzagging fingers).
24. Student B: *Yes.*
25. Student A: *Vale, ya está, bueno!* (Eng. '*Alright, that's it, good!*')
26. Student B: *Joé* (Eng. '*Crikey*!') *A ver* (Eng. '*let's see*') ,*the second.*
27. Student A: *The second.*
28. Student B: *The girl, erm… Is… is… put… on… on rain boots* (pron. '*boats*').
29. Student A: *Boots* (pron. '*boats*').

30. Student B: *Pink*?
31. Student A: *Pink, aha.*
32. Student B: *And, erm…*
33. Student A: *She is sit or…?*
34. Student B: *Yes, yes, and, and boy sit.*
35. Student A: *And boy sit, aha.*
36. Student B: *And…*
37. Student A: *Ya está* (Eng. *'I've got it').*
38. Student B: *Ah, vale.* (Eng. '*Oh, ok'*). *The…third, the boy… has put. Has put?* (asking herself) *Erm… the… joder* (Eng. '*fuck'*), anorak (Spanish pronunciation)?
39. Student A: *Coat* (well pronounced). *Coat* (pron. *Co – att*).
40. Student B: *Coat* (pron. *Co – att*).
41. Student A: *Coat* (pron. *Co – att*).
42. Student B: *Yes, and the girl, erm… is… sit* (pron. '*sheet'*).
43. Student A: *Sit* (pron. '*sheet'*), *aha!*
44. Student B: *The boy no.*
45. Student A: *Aha, ya*. (Eng. '*now'*)
46. Student B: *Vale* (Eng. 'ok'), *the fourth. They, they… have , they have, erm… a put… erm…*
47. Student A: *The hat?*
48. Student B: *Yes! The hat! The boy green and the girl yellow.*
49. Student A: *Yellow* (simultaneously with 'B') *Aha! Yes. Five.*
50. Student B: *Ah! They, they go to the street and… erm… go to have… to… sun.*
51. Student A: *Sun?*
52. Student B: *It's no rain.*
53. Student A: *Aha! The coat, mmm….*
54. Student B: *Umbrella, erm… the boy.*
55. Student A: *The coat's* (pron. *Co – att*) *bo, boy are… the… picture? At the picture? Or not?*
56. Student B: *No.*
57. Student A: *No.*
58. Student B: *At the picture?*
59. Student A: *The coat* (pron. *Co – att*) *the coat's* (pron. *Co – att*) *boy no are the picture…* (pointing at her cardigan). *Sí* (Eng. '*yes'*).
60. Student B: *It's, is brown, brown and…and white.*
61. Student A: *Brown? Only brown. Vale, pues ya está (Eng. 'Ok, that's it'). The five, ya.* (Eng. '*that's it'*).
62. Student B: *Vale* (Eng. '*ok'*). (standing up to check).

ADULT-ADULT D2T2
TIME: 3:37

Researcher's introduction: *"Now, (Student A's name), you have this story, and (Student B's name), you have this pictures. (Student A's name, you tell the story now."*

1. Student A: *Start?*
2. Student B: (nods)
3. Student A: *Erm… one family, erm… travel in a car. In a car. Erm… the… the father, and, and boy and un* (French '*one'*) *girl.*
4. Student B: *The, the… the children are, erm… Arms, erm… up* (pointing upwards with hand)?
5. Student A: *Up? Yes, the toyshop.*
6. Student B: *Vale* (Eng. '*ok'*).
7. Student A: *First, del siguiente* (Eng. '*of the next one'*). *There are in a … in a… shop. Espera* (Eng. 'wait'). *Shoes* (pron. '*show'*), *shoes* (pron. '*show'*) *shop.*
8. Student B: *Ah, vale* (Eng. '*ok'*).
9. Student A: *The children think, thinking in the toyshop.*
10. Student B: *Vale* (Eng. '*ok'*), *next.*
11. Student A: *Erm… now… erm… they are in the supermarket, the father… are a… No veo qué tiene ahí* (Eng. '*I can't see what he's got there'*).
12. Student B: *Vale* (Eng. 'ok') , *erm… the boy, the boy is, in, erm… Is, a ver* (Eng. '*let's see'*), *they are father, boy, girl or father, girl boy.*
13. Student A: *No: the first: father, boy, girl.*
14. Student B: *Vale* (Eng. '*ok'*), *next.*
15. Student A: *Erm… they are in the… in the… library (pron. 'lee-brary'). The father read a book.*
16. Student B: *Next*?
17. Student A: *The childrens are tired* (pron. '*tie – red'*) *or… or…*
18. Student B: *Vale* (Eng. '*ok'*) , *and… jarri* (Basque 'to') *erm… and write, erm… up the children* (pretending to write)?
19. Student A: *No, il* (French 'he'). *Erm, erm… il! El francés…* ('*My French…*'). *They think erm… erm… in the… in the toyshop too.*
20. Student B: *Eh?*
21. Student A: *Think, thinking on the toyshop.*
22. Student B: *No, no. Erm, erm, erm…*
23. Student A: *The children.*
24. Student B: *The five?*
25. Student A: *No, the four.*
26. Student B: *The four, vale* (Eng. '*ok'*).

27. Student A: *Four. Esa ya está? ¡Ah, joé qué rápida!* (Eng. '*You've got that one already? My are you fast!'*) *Yes, in the five the children are… sleeping.*
28. Student B: *But they… but write 'th'?* (pretending to squiggle up 'z')
29. Student A: *Z* (pron. '*sheed'*), *z* (pron. '*sheed'*), *yes.*
30. Student B: *Up the children?*
31. Student A: Yes.
32. Student B: *Vale, ya está* (Eng. '*ok, I'm done'*).

APPENDIX G – RAW DATA

Table 21. Children: Conversational adjustments (raw data)

SUBJECT GROUP	UTTERANCES	CONVERSATIONAL ADJUSTMENTS				
CHILDREN -A1 (20 subjects)		CLAR.REQ.	CONF.CH.	COMP.CH.	TOTAL	ACKNOW
TOTAL DAY 1 TASK 1	297	13	3	0	16	45
TOTAL %		4,38	1,01	0	5,39	15,15
TOTAL DAY 1 TASK 2	494	4	0	0	4	2
TOTAL %		0,81	0	0	0,81	0,40
TOTAL CHILDREN D1	791	17	3	0	20	47
TOTAL CHILDREN D1 %		2,15	0,38	0	2,53	5,94
TOTAL DAY 2 TASK 1	320	10	4	6	20	29
TOTAL D2 T1 NARRATORS	203	2	3	6	11	2
TOTAL D2 T1 STORY BUILDERS	117	8	1	0	9	27
TOTAL %		3,13	1,25	1,88	6,25	9,06
TOTAL % D2 T1 NARRATORS	63,44	0,63	0,94	1,88	3,44	0,63
TOTAL % D2 T1 STORY BUILDERS	36,56	2,50	0,31	0	2,81	8,44
TOTAL DAY 2 TASK 2	465	19	4	7	30	37
TOTAL D2 T2 NARRATORS	329	7	1	7	15	0
TOTAL D2 T2 STORY BUILDERS	136	12	3	0	15	34
TOTAL %		4,09	0,86	1,51	6,45	7,96
TOTAL % D2 T2 NARRATORS	70,75	1,51	0,22	1,51	3,23	0
TOTAL % D2 T2 STORY BUILDERS	29,25	2,58	0,65	0	3,23	7,96
TOTAL CHILDREN D2	785	29	8	13	50	66
TOTAL CHILDREN D2 %		3,69	1,02	1,66	6,37	8,41
TOTAL CHILDREN D1&D2	1576	46	11	13	70	113
TOTAL CHILDREN D1&D2 %		2,92	0,70	0,82	4,44	7,17
TOTAL CHILDREN STORY BUILDERS	550	33	7	0	40	106
TOTAL CHILDREN STORY BUILDERS%		6	1,27	0	7,27	19,27
TOTAL CHILDREN NARRATORS	1026	13	4	13	30	4
TOTAL CHILDREN NARRATORS%		1,27	0,39	1,27	2,92	0,39

Table 22. Adults: Conversational adjustments (raw data)

SUBJECT GROUP	UTTERANCES	CONVERSATIONAL ADJUSTMENTS				
ADULTS -A1 (14 subjects)		CLAR.REQ.	CONF.CH.	COMP.CH.	TOTAL	ACKNOW
TOTAL DAY 1 TASK 1	587	41	23	0	64	64
TOTAL %		6,98	3,92	0	10,90	10,90
TOTAL DAY 1 TASK 2	573	20	17	1	38	8
TOTAL %		3,49	2,97	0,17	6,63	1,40
TOTAL ADULTS D1	1160	61	40	1	102	72
TOTAL ADULTS D1 %		5,26	3,45	0,09	8,79	6,21
TOTAL DAY 2 TASK 1	758	12	11	11	34	47
TOTAL D2 T1 NARRATORS	425	6	5	11	15	5
TOTAL D2 T1 STORY BUILDERS	333	6	6	0	19	42
TOTAL D2T1%		1,58	1,45	1,45	4,49	6,20
TOTAL % D2 T1 NARRATORS	56,07	0,79	0,66	1,45	1,98	0,66
TOTAL % D2 T1 STORY BUILDERS	43,93	0,79	0,79	0	2,51	5,54
TOTAL DAY 2 TASK 2	560	7	12	9	28	46
TOTAL D2 T2 NARRATORS	309	2	5	9	13	0
TOTAL D2 T2 STORY BUILDERS	251	5	7	0	15	46
TOTAL D2T2%		1,25	2,14	1,61	5	8,21
TOTAL % D2 T2 NARRATORS	55,18	0,36	0,89	1,61	2,32	0
TOTAL % D2 T2 STORY BUILDERS	44,82	0,89	1,25	0	2,68	8,21
TOTAL ADULTS D2	1318	19	23	20	62	93
TOTAL ADULTS D2 %		1,44	1,75	1,52	4,70	7,06
TOTAL ADULTS D1&D2	2478	80	63	21	164	165
TOTAL ADULTS D1&D2 %		3,23	2,54	0,85	6,62	6,66
TOTAL ADULTS STORY BUILDERS	1171	52	36	0	98	152
TOTAL ADULTS STORY BUILDERS%		4,44	3,07	0	8,37	12,98
TOTAL ADULTS NARRATORS	1307	28	27	21	66	13
TOTAL ADULTS NARRATORS%		2,14	2,07	1,61	5,05	0,99

Table 23. Children: Repetitions (raw data)

SUBJECT GROUP	UTTERANCES	REPETITION							
		SELF-REPETITION				OTHER-REPETITION			
CHILDREN -A1 (20 subjects)		PART.	EXA.	EXP.	TOTAL	PART.	EXA.	EXP.	TOTAL
TOTAL DAY 1 TASK 1	297	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	5
TOTAL %		0	0	0	0	1,68	0	0	1,68
TOTAL DAY 1 TASK 2	494	47	0	0	47	87	1	0	88
TOTAL %		9,51	0	0	9,51	17,61	0	0,20	17,81
TOTAL CHILDREN D1	791	47	0	0	47	92	1	0	93
TOTAL CHILDREN D1 %		5,94	0	0	5,94	11,63	0,13	0	11,76
TOTAL DAY 2 TASK 1	320	82	7	0	89	34	0	0	34
TOTAL D2 T1 NARRATORS	203	69	0	0	69	21	0	0	21
TOTAL D2 T1 STORY BUILDERS	117	13	7	0	20	13	0	0	13
TOTAL %		25,63	2,19	0	27,81	10,63	0	0	10,63
TOTAL % D2 T1 NARRATORS	63,44	21,56	0	0	21,56	6,56	0	0	6,56
TOTAL % D2 T1 STORY BUILDERS	36,56	4,06	2,19	0	6,25	4,06	0	0	4,06
TOTAL DAY 2 TASK 2	465	142	3	0	145	31	0	2	33
TOTAL D2 T2 NARRATORS	329	136	0	0	94	20	0	2	19
TOTAL D2 T2 STORY BUILDERS	136	6	3	0	9	11	0	0	11
TOTAL %		30,54	0,65	0	31,18	6,67	0	0,43	7,10
TOTAL % D2 T2 NARRATORS	70,75	29,25	0	0	20,22	4,30	0	0,43	4,09
TOTAL % D2 T2 STORY BUILDERS	29,25	1,29	0,65	0	1,94	2,37	0	0	2,37
TOTAL CHILDREN D2	785	224	10	0	234	65	0	2	67
TOTAL CHILDREN D2 %		28,54	1,27	0	29,81	8,28	0	0,25	8,54
TOTAL CHILDREN D1&D2	1576	271	10	0	281	157	1	2	160
TOTAL CHILDREN D1&D2 %		17,20	0,63	0	17,83	9,96	0,06	0,13	10,15
TOTAL CHILDREN STORY BUILDERS	550	19	10	0	29	29	0	0	29
TOTAL CHILDREN STORY BUILDERS%		3,45	1,82	0	5,27	5,27	0	0	5,27
TOTAL CHILDREN NARRATORS	1026	252	0	0	210	128	1	2	128
TOTAL CHILDREN NARRATORS%		24,56	0	0	20,47	12,48	0,10	0,19	12,48

Table 24. Adults: Repetitions (raw data)

SUBJECT GROUP	UTTERANCES	REPETITION							
		SELF-REPETITION				OTHER-REPETITION			
ADULTS -A1 (14 subjects)		PART.	EXA.	EXP.	TOTAL	PART.	EXA.	EXP.	TOTAL
TOTAL DAY 1 TASK 1	587	30	0	2	36	79	18	4	97
TOTAL %		5,11	0	0,34	6,13	13,46	3,07	0,68	16,52
TOTAL DAY 1 TASK 2	573	109	2	0	111	112	11	10	133
TOTAL %		19,02	0,35	0	19,37	19,55	1,92	1,75	23,21
TOTAL ADULTS D1	1160	139	2	2	147	191	29	14	230
TOTAL ADULTS D1 %		11,98	0,17	0,17	12,67	16,47	2,50	1,21	19,83
TOTAL DAY 2 TASK 1	758	167	34	4	205	78	9	5	92
TOTAL D2 T1 NARRATORS	425	110	5	1	116	58	1	3	62
TOTAL D2 T1 STORY BUILDERS	333	57	29	3	89	20	8	2	30
TOTAL D2T1%		22,03	4,49	0,53	27,04	10,29	1,19	0,66	12,14
TOTAL % D2 T1 NARRATORS	56,07	14,51	0,66	0,13	15,30	7,65	0,13	0,40	8,18
TOTAL % D2 T1 STORY BUILDERS	43,93	7,52	3,83	0,40	11,74	2,64	1,06	0,26	3,96
TOTAL DAY 2 TASK 2	560	151	1	0	152	63	7	3	73
TOTAL D2 T2 NARRATORS	309	99	1	0	100	26	1	2	29
TOTAL D2 T2 STORY BUILDERS	251	52	0	0	52	37	6	1	44
TOTAL D2T2%		26,96	0,18	0	27,14	11,25	1,25	0,54	13,04
TOTAL % D2 T2 NARRATORS	55,18	17,68	0,18	0	17,86	4,64	0,18	0,36	5,18
TOTAL % D2 T2 STORY BUILDERS	44,82	9,29	0	0	9,29	6,61	1,07	0,18	7,86
TOTAL ADULTS D2	1318	318	35	4	357	141	16	8	165
TOTAL ADULTS D2 %		24,13	2,66	0,30	27,09	10,70	1,21	0,61	12,52
TOTAL ADULTS D1&D2	2478	457	37	6	504	332	45	22	395
TOTAL ADULTS D1&D2 %		18,44	1,49	0,24	20,34	13,40	1,82	0,89	15,94
TOTAL ADULTS STORY BUILDERS	1171	139	29	5	177	136	32	7	171
TOTAL ADULTS STORY BUILDERS%		11,87	2,48	0,43	15,12	11,61	2,73	0,60	14,60
TOTAL ADULTS NARRATORS	1307	318	8	1	327	196	13	15	224
TOTAL ADULTS NARRATORS%		24,33	0,61	0,08	25,02	15	0,99	1,15	17,14

Table 25. Children and adults: L1 use (raw data)

CHILDREN -A1 (20 subjects)		RAW DATA	PERCENTAGE
D1T1	UTTERANCES	297	
D1T1	L1 USE	0	0
D1T2	UTTERANCES	494	
D1T2	L1 USE	6	1,21
D1	UTTERANCES	791	
D1	L1 USE	6	0,76
D2T1	UTTERANCES	320	
D2T1	L1 USE	3	0,94
D2T2	UTTERANCES	465	
D2T2	L1 USE	9	1,94
D2	UTTERANCES	785	
D2	L1 USE	12	1,53

ADULTS -A1 (14 subjects)		RAW DATA	PERCENTAGE
D1T1	UTTERANCES	587	
D1T1	L1 USE	99	16,87
D1T2	UTTERANCES	573	
D1T2	L1 USE	107	18,67
D1	UTTERANCES	1160	
D1	L1 USE	206	17,76
D2T1	UTTERANCES	758	
D2T1	L1 USE	99	13,06
D2T2	UTTERANCES	560	
D2T2	L1 USE	102	18,21
D2	UTTERANCES	1318	
D2	L1 USE	201	15,25

Table 26. Children and adults: L1 structures (raw data)

CHILDREN -A1 (20 subjects)	STRUCT.TRANS.
TOTAL DAY 1 TASK 1	27
TOTAL %	9,09
TOTAL DAY 1 TASK 2	47
TOTAL %	9,51
TOTAL CHILDREN D1	74
TOTAL CHILDREN D1 %	9,36
TOTAL DAY 2 TASK 1	58
TOTAL D2 T1 NARRATORS	46
TOTAL D2 T1 STORY BUILDERS	12
TOTAL %	18,13
TOTAL % D2 T1 NARRATORS	14,38
TOTAL % D2 T1 STORY BUILDERS	3,75
TOTAL DAY 2 TASK 2	55
TOTAL D2 T2 NARRATORS	36
TOTAL D2 T2 STORY BUILDERS	19
TOTAL %	11,83
TOTAL % D2 T2 NARRATORS	7,74
TOTAL % D2 T2 STORY BUILDERS	4,09
TOTAL CHILDREN D2	113
TOTAL CHILDREN D2 %	14,39
TOTAL CHILDREN D1&D2	187
TOTAL CHILDREN D1&D2 %	11,87
TOTAL CHILDREN STORY BUILDERS	58
TOTAL CHILDREN STORY BUILDERS%	10,55
TOTAL CHILDREN NARRATORS	129
TOTAL CHILDREN NARRATORS%	12,57

ADULTS -A1 (14 subjects)	STRUCT.TRANS.
TOTAL DAY 1 TASK 1	49
TOTAL %	8,35
TOTAL DAY 1 TASK 2	44
TOTAL %	7,68
TOTAL ADULTS D1	93
TOTAL ADULTS D1 %	8,02
TOTAL DAY 2 TASK 1	56
TOTAL D2 T1 NARRATORS	34
TOTAL D2 T1 STORY BUILDERS	22
TOTAL D2T1%	7,39
TOTAL % D2 T1 NARRATORS	4,49
TOTAL % D2 T1 STORY BUILDERS	2,90
TOTAL DAY 2 TASK 2	53
TOTAL D2 T2 NARRATORS	19
TOTAL D2 T2 STORY BUILDERS	34
TOTAL D2T2%	9,46
TOTAL % D2 T2 NARRATORS	3,39
TOTAL % D2 T2 STORY BUILDERS	6,07
TOTAL ADULTS D2	109
TOTAL ADULTS D2 %	8,27
TOTAL ADULTS D1&D2	202
TOTAL ADULTS D1&D2 %	8,15
TOTAL ADULTS STORY BUILDERS	105
TOTAL ADULTS STORY BUILDERS%	8,97
TOTAL ADULTS NARRATORS	97
TOTAL ADULTS NARRATORS%	7,42